

Reviewer's report

Title: Age at disability onset and health-related quality of life

Version: 1 Date: 23 April 2007

Reviewer: Susan Kinne

Reviewer's report:

General

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The analysis is perfectly reasonable, but I do not understand what is gained by referring to self rated health status (the dependent variable) as "HRQoL". The source used specifically to justify this label (reference 20, "self rated health and mortality") talks about this measure as "self reported health", not "HRQoL". Reviewing reference #5 ("Health related quality of life outcome measures", Meyers & Andresen) I see only passing mention of health status, and mostly as a component, not the primary measure of, HRQOL.

Health status is...health status. It may be included in what Moriarty insists on calling the "HRQOL" BRFSS questions, but it is something quite different than the preference-based thing that many of us imagine when we think of a QOL measure. Why apply an alternate label to a measure that is well-known in the field as "health"? Such usage sets it at variance with much other literature in this and other fields. It makes it hard to tell whether the condition-specific references about "HRQoL" are relevant, since most do not use self rated health as their measure of HRQOL. If the paper wants to use self rated health and call it "HRQOL", I suggest that some explanation or explicit justification would be indicated, to placate irritable readers like me.

The discussion is helpful and points reasonably toward additional investigations.

The paper reads well and is clearly organized.

The analysis is appropriate.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests