

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form ([see an example](#)) and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below. Some articles will have been accepted based in part or entirely on reviews undertaken for other BMJ Group journals. These will be reproduced where possible.

ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Self-rated health and mortality in individuals with diabetes mellitus: prospective cohort study
AUTHORS	Patrik Wennberg, Olov Rolandsson, Lars Jerdén, Heiner Boeing, Diewertje Sluik, Rudolf Kaaks, Birgit Teucher, Annemieke Spijkerman, Bas Bueno de Mesquita, Claus Dethlefsen, Peter M Nilsson and Ute Nöthlings

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

REVIEWER	Anna Nixon Andreasson, PhD Karolinska Institutet, Sweden. There are no competing interests to declare.
REVIEW RETURNED	30/12/2011

THE STUDY	There were no supplemental documents.
GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>The authors present an important study examining self-rated health as a mortality predictor in individuals with diabetes on which few studies have been performed.</p> <p>I have two major comments:</p> <p>I recommend using the standard cut-off points for BMI, rather than the tertile stratification currently used, as the standard cut-off points have been shown to fit well with BMI as a mortality predictor (Wändell PE, Carlsson AC, Theobald H: The association between BMI value and long-term mortality. International Journal of Obesity 2009, 33(5):577-582.) and to facilitate comparability with other studies. This is also likely to improve readability of the presented results (Results, page 10, line 14).</p> <p>I also suggest using 5-year mortality as a cut-off point rather than the median of 5.4 years to increase comparability (Results, page 10, line 1). That would also make statements made in the manuscript, such as “the association was mainly driven by increased five-year mortality in men” (Abstract, page 3) more true.</p> <p>The following minor comments are intended to help improve the manuscript:</p> <p>Abstract: Line 6. Remove “scores” as it is the concept of self-rated health that is the predictor not the scores. Line 37. In the sentence “the association was mainly driven by increased five-year mortality in men” it is not clearly conveyed that the association was significant in men only. Consider revising accordingly.</p>

	<p>Line 40. Does the word “lean” mean “under-weight” or “normal-weight”? Please clarify.</p> <p>Introduction: Page 5, line 50. Please add references to the studies on short-term mortality.</p> <p>Methods: Page 6, line 55. The study’s shortcomings in distinguishing between Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes should be mentioned as a limitation in Discussion. Page 7, line 37. What scale was used to assess education? Please clarify in the Covariates and Outcome. Page 7, line 37. What was the question used to assess physical activity level? Please clarify in the Covariates and Outcome.</p> <p>Discussion: Use “individuals with diabetes” instead of “patients with diabetes” throughout the manuscript, as in the title, since this is a population based study.</p>
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REVIEWER	Jennifer Gander Baker Research Assistant University of South Carolina United States of America
REVIEW RETURNED	08/01/2012

THE STUDY	<p>Cite other studies that have dichotomized SRH to add to validity of reasoning for dichotmization other than for sample size reasons.</p> <p>Supplemental documents explain information adequately</p>
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

We have revised the manuscript according to the reviewers’ suggestions. You can find our answers below in italics. We have made the changes in the manuscript in color (yellow).

Sincerely
Patrik Wennberg

Reviewer: Anna Nixon Andreasson, PhD
Karolinska Institutet, Sweden.

There are no competing interests to declare.

The authors present an important study examining self-rated health as a mortality predictor in individuals with diabetes on which few studies have been performed.

I have two major comments:

I recommend using the standard cut-off points for BMI, rather than the tertile stratification currently used, as the standard cut-off points have been shown to fit well with BMI as a mortality predictor (Wändell PE, Carlsson AC, Theobald H: The association between BMI value and long-term mortality. International Journal of Obesity 2009, 33(5):577-582.) and to facilitate comparability with other studies. This is also likely to improve readability of the presented results (Results, page 10, line 14).

Answer: We agree with the reviewer and in the revised version we present results based on standard BMI cut-off points.

I also suggest using 5-year mortality as a cut-off point rather than the median of 5.4 years to increase comparability (Results, page 10, line 1). That would also make statements made in the manuscript, such as “the association was mainly driven by increased five-year mortality in men” (Abstract, page 3) more true.

Answer: We have adjusted to 5-year mortality and added the number of deaths that occurred before and after 5 years of follow-up.

The following minor comments are intended to help improve the manuscript:

Abstract:

Line 6. Remove “scores” as it is the concept of self-rated health that is the predictor not the scores.

Answer: Done.

Line 37. In the sentence “the association was mainly driven by increased five-year mortality in men” it is not clearly conveyed that the association was significant in men only. Consider revising accordingly.

Answer: Done.

Line 40. Does the word “lean” mean “under-weight” or “normal-weight”? Please clarify.

Answer: We have replaced these phrases with “individuals with BMI <25”.

Introduction:

Page 5, line 50. Please add references to the studies on short-term mortality.

Answer: Done.

Methods:

Page 6, line 55. The study’s shortcomings in distinguishing between Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes should be mentioned as a limitation in Discussion.

Answer: Done.

Page 7, line 37. What scale was used to assess education? Please clarify in the Covariates and Outcome.

Answer: We have added a reference that describes collection of data in EPIC.

Page 7, line 37. What was the question used to assess physical activity level? Please clarify in the Covariates and Outcome.

Answer: We used a set of questions called “Cambridge Index”. A reference to a validation study of this physical activity index has been added.

Discussion:

Use “individuals with diabetes” instead of “patients with diabetes” throughout the manuscript, as in the title, since this is a population based study.

Answer: Done.

Reviewer: Jennifer Gander Baker
Research Assistant

University of South Carolina
United States of America

Cite other studies that have dichotomized SRH to add to validity of reasoning for dichotmization other than for sample size reasons.

Answer: Done.

Supplemental documents explain information adequately

Good inclusion of standardization of SRH question from each cite

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Anna Nixon Andreasson, PhD Karolinska Institutet Sweden No competing interests
REVIEW RETURNED	20/01/2012
THE STUDY	There are no supplemental documents containing information that should be better reported in the manuscript or raise questions about the work.
GENERAL COMMENTS	The authors are commended for this important, relevant and well-presented study.