Reviewer’s report

Title: Fatal poisonings in Oslo: A one-year observational study

Version: 1 Date: 7 March 2010

Reviewer: Anna Jönsson

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Methods- Why have social security number been used to translate the Norwegian “fødselsnummer” instead of personal identification number, the official designation in Norway?

Minor Essential Revisions

2. Abstract- In the abstract it is stated that methanol, TCAs and antihistamines were the most toxic agents. Could you rephrase this sentence? You have established a higher case-fatality rate. Moreover, you have made a typographical error, could you change the CI from 96% to 95% in the abstract?

3. Aim- The sentences after the aim should be changed to the primary and secondary aim or included as a part of the methods section.

4. Methods- How were the intoxications identified in hospital? Were the cases identified at admission or were the patient records reviewed based on ICD-codes? Is there a possibility that cases might have been missed?

5. Methods- I am not familiar with the Norwegian institute of forensic medicine. Is it possible to be admitted to this institute? Is the exclusion criteria admission with another primary diagnosis such as trauma or cases where the primary cause of death was a trauma?

6. Methods- “For the patients who survived, the main toxic agent was defined as the substance supposed to be most toxic considered the amount taken”. What scientific evidence was used to assign this?

7. Results- in this study the results are related to non-fatal cases. Based on the information in this article it is not clear how these cases were identified or assessed. Please indicate on page 11 the number of non-fatal cases. If this information is available in a previously published study, please refer to that article.

8. Tables- Please indicate, when appropriate, that the cases concern fatal poisonings. The tables should be possible to interpret seperately.

9. Table 3 and Table 5- The total proportion should be 100 % instead of 101% and 101.6%, respectively.
10. Table 5- Could you please change the heading “comparison” of the last two columns.

11. Table 5- Could you please explain that the drugs were ordered according to their fatality rate. And change the heading “>5% fatal” to “>5% fatality rate”.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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