Reviewer's report

Title: GPs are less active in managing young adults who will attempt suicide. A cross-sectional study

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Reviewer: Nat Wright

Reviewer's report:

This paper addresses an important topic that is relevant to the primary care community.

The major concern I have with this paper are the definitions of “young adult” and “older adult”. In the second paragraph of the background section, the authors have appropriately alluded to the fact that different commentators define “young” in different ways. However the concern I have is that the authors have biased their writing towards supporting the commentators who would define the upper age of “young adult” as aged 35. For example in the US census data the following age bands are used:

- Under aged 18
- 18-29 years
- 30-44 years
- 45-64 years
- 65 years and over

In Erik Erikson’s widely cited life model young adult is defined as aged 20-40. It is my understanding that the DSM-IV manual revised the upper age limit of “young adult” upwards to aged 45. I cite these examples to encourage the authors to consider internationally how “young adult” is defined and to consider re-categorising and reanalysing the data according to such age bands.

Indeed have the French Sentinel Surveillance database from which the authors retrieved the data categorised the data into aged bands? If so it would appear the most credible option would be to analyse the data according to such categories? Alternatively a credible option could be to use the definitions and age bands used in the French Population Census.

If re-analysing the data is not feasible then I would suggest the authors highlight whether they wrote a research protocol prior to data retrieval. If this was the case then they could reasonably defend themselves against criticism of data dredging. If a research protocol was not written a priori then the authors must report that they have undertaken a post-hoc analysis of the data and consider applying a more rigorous statistical test of significance (eg. Bonferroni corrections).

On page 10 the authors conclude that their findings contradict those of a large study of suicide attempters in Finland. The authors need to report whether the Finnish researchers used different definitions of “young adult” and “older adult”
since the obvious explanation for the contradiction is a difference in case definition.

**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'