Reviewer’s report

Title: A nationwide population-based study of the inflammatory bowel diseases between 1998 and 2008 in Taiwan

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Reviewer: Siew Ng

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By using a nationwide registration system in Taiwan, the authors have shown the incidence and prevalence of IBD in Taiwan and further demonstrated a rise in incidence and prevalence from 1998 to 2008. These are one of the first few data nationwide emerging from Taiwan and showed consistent trend with that of studies from Korea, Japan and Hong Kong. Unlike in the West, there are very few countries in Asia with the exception of Japan and Taiwan that have nationwide registry system. These data are important and will contribute to our knowledge on the epidemiology of IBD in Asia, which until recently have been lacking.

Major Compulsory Revisions

None

Minor Essential Revisions

Although their data are timely, the paper will carry more weight if they were to discuss their data in context of the recently published large scale population-based epidemiologic study across nine countries in Asia-Pacific showing geographic variability in disease incidence even within Asia (Ng et al. Gastroenterology 2013). Taiwan appeared to have disease incidence that is lower than Hong Kong, some parts of Mainland China, and Macau, relatively similar to that of Malaysia and Sri Lanka, but higher than that of Thailand and Indonesia. One may speculate that different degree of urbanization/socioeconomic status may play a part to the variation. UC is also more common in Taiwan.

I think it would be worth discussing the magnitude of this incomplete capture, ie the true patient load versus registered patient number, is there anyway of having an estimation of the proportion not registered relative to this study.

Do the data represent crude annual incidence or age-standardized incidence based on WHO criteria?

Are disease phenotypes captured within the registry – it would be interesting to compare disease behaviour and severity with other Asian countries and the West. Especially since the authors have shown a higher standardized mortality rate compared with the general population for Crohn’s disease and the West/Japan. It is useful to speculate more on what could be the potential cause,
eg patients with co-morbidities and older age have increased mortality.

**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'