Reviewer’s report

Title: Acute viral hepatitis morbidity and mortality associated with hepatitis E virus infection: Uzbekistan surveillance data

Version: 1 Date: 14 August 2008

Reviewer: Nandagudi S Murthy

Reviewer’s report:

Sub: Comments on the paper entitled “Acute viral hepatitis morbidity and .....Surveillance data”.

Minor essential revisions:

Abstract:
1) Page No. 3, background; paragraph 1, lines 6-7: It is mentioned that, “....trends in AVH associated mortality rate (MR) per 100, 000 over a 35 year period and reported incidence of AVH over a 15-year period were examined”. However, as per the methods section, the AVH incidence data pertains to 35 years while the mortality data was for 15 years respectively. Suitable corrections need to be carried-out in the text portion of the paper in the background paragraph under abstract.

2) Page No.3, results; paragraph 3, line 22: The ratio of two odds refers to odds ratio (OR), while the ratio of two rates refer to relative risk (RR). If the authors have estimated the ratio of two mortality rates between rural and urban populations, the term “OR” should be replaced by RR under line No.22 (OR2.4; 95%CI 2.2-2.7) after checking for calculations.

Methods:

3) Page No.9; Statistical Methods; paragraph 2, lines 4-9: The description of statistical analysis procedure is quite confusing and requires to be provided in a more detailed manner. The authors have mentioned that odds ratios (OR), student’s t-test, were employed. Looking into the results, it is not clear where such analysis procedures have been employed. Similarly, it is mentioned that “statistical significance was determined by calculating a p value”, it is not clear what type of statistical test was adopted for estimating statistical significance and for estimating p value? Similarly, it is not clear which statistical test was employed for testing the differences in a) mortality rates between the two periods 1987 and 1995, b) rates between two sexes in page numbers 10 & 11. Statistical testing procedures employed for testing the differences between various parameters need to be provided under statistical analysis in a more detailed manner.

4) Page No. 9; Statistical Methods; paragraph 2, lines 4-9: For undertaking a correlation analysis between the incidence and mortality rate, it is necessary to take the logarithms (log10.) of the rates and to do the correlation analysis in the
transformation of scale as the rates themselves in their original scale do not adhere to
the assumptions required to calculate the correlation coefficient.

Results

5) Page No. 10, results; paragraph 3, line 13: If the authors have estimated the
ratio of two mortality rates between males and females, the term “OR” should be
replaced with “RR” under line 13 (OR 1.0; 95% CI 0.8-1.4).

6) Page No. 11 and 12, Results: 95% CI should also be given for various RR;
RR=1.3, 2.6, 2.8, 2.6, 1.3, 2.2 and 1.1 mentioned in the text.

7) Page No. 12, Results: The comment No.3 mentioned under page 9 applies for
HEV serology section also.

8) Figure 1, Appropriate labeling be made for X-axis as “Years”.

9) Figure 2, Appropriate labeling be made for X-axis as “Years” and Y-axis as
rates. It is not a histogram, and is a multiple bar diagram, appropriate correction
be made in legend of figure.

10) Figure 3, It is quite difficult to understand the presentations made in figure 3.
The results if provided in a tabular form also will help for a better understand.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'