Reviewer’s report

Title: The burden of stroke and transient ischemic attacks in Pakistan: a community-based prevalence study.

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Reviewer: Vlasta Vukovic

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Review of the article „Burden of stroke and transient ischemic attacks in Pakistan: a community-based prevalence study

Epidemiological studies are interesting, new studies from low and middle income countries are wellcommed. Authors of this study are reporting the prevalence of stroke and TIA in an urban slum of Karachi, Pakistan; this study is the first of this kind from that area and therefore very wellcommed.

The methods used in this study are well described, the study design is clear, sample size estimation has been calculated and presented, data collection have been clearly explained and presented including the questionnaire in local language and in english. Statistical analysis is shortly but sufficiently presente. However, in the method section, the authors do not mention or explain the term „cerebrovascular disease (CVD)” but in statistical analysis CVD is mentioned, this will need some clarification (see major revisions).

The results are clearly presented in 4 tables and 2 figures and explained in text. The manuscript adheres to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.

The discussion is well written and adequately supported by references from the literature, mostly comparable with the study results.

The authors should emphasize in the paragraph limitations of the study that this was a retrospective study which could have underestimated the results.

The title and the abstract present the main findings of the study; certain minor changes will be suggested.

The writting and language in the article are acceptable.

Minor revisions:

Abstract- it is not necessary to mention the statistic package used for statistical analysis- this can be omitted. A sentence should begin with a word not a number; therfore the result section should begin with „Five hundred forty five individuals etc.”, similar changes are needed on several places in the text as well.

Background: instead of the word „non-communicable” I suggest the word „cerebrovascular” disease to be written.

Materials and methods: In sample size estimation the sentence 600 households
should begin as: Six hundred....

Minor corrections in grammar are advised.

I suggest that in Table 1 instead of 6 columns only 3 are shown: instead of two separate columns: n and % should be placed in an unique column n (%) like the authors have done in Tables 3 and 4.

P in P-value is usually written in capital letters.

The term „cerebrovascular diseases“ encompasses entities such as stroke and TIA as separate disorders as well as a number of other disorders of vascular origin. Explanation of the CVD group in the paper in the abstract as well in the text is not written clearly and may be confusing to readers. Therefore the term „cerebrovascular diseases“ should be omitted; I suggest that the authors explain that a proportion of the participants had both stroke and TIA (21.8%), i.e in Table 3. instead of CVD „stroke+TIA“ should be written.

Furthermore, in text it seems as if in univariate analysis only patients with CVD were included, not the whole group including patients who had stroke and TIA only, and in Table 3 the data are presented as the group „No CVD“ and CVD. This needs clarification: is the group „No CVD“ in fact the stroke or TIA group? The authors should write this clearly in the headings. Accordingly the headings in Table 3 and 4 need to be changed. In figures „Prevalence of CVD in females/males“ CVD should be replaced with stroke + TIA

After making suggested corrections, I advise to accept the paper for publication.

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Zagreb, 31.08. 2009.

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

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 I have no competing interests.