Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 3 September 2009

Reviewer: Craig Anderson

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This is an important epidemiological study reporting the high prevalence and associated risk factors of stroke and TIA in an urban slum area of Pakistan, highlighting the rapid epidemiological transition to an important chronic disease in a developing country. The sampling process and assessment criteria to provide reliable estimates appear rigorous and the manuscript is well written in presenting the data. There are few issues to address.

Major

1. More details are required regarding the Census undertaken by the University Department in 2008 that provided the basis for the sampling frame and other data on the characteristics of the population. Did this use sampling or whole of population door-to-door sampling, and is anything published regarding this work?
2. It is a little unclear whether clustering is involved in this study, and therefore needs to be adjusted for in the analyses. Please make it clear as to whether ‘single’ or ‘multiple’ adults were interviewed from each household. If the latter, then some adjustments will need to be made for the sampling frame.
3. Multiviable logistic regression analysis – I think an error has been made in the statistical analysis section, where $p>0.1$ should mean $p<0.1$ for criteria of inclusion of variable from univariate to modeling.
4. It would appear that participants were assessed at ‘the study site’. Please make it clear as to whether participants were assessed in the home (screening) and then in a clinic (neurological review, blood tests, etc) or whether all were undertaken in the home.
5. The prevalence figures are high but without some comparison, the less informed will not fully appreciate the data. It would be good if these data were compared with other prevalence data from populations in a Table to be added to the manuscript.

Minor

1. Diagnoses are usually singular – that is ‘stroke’, ‘transient ischemic attack’, and ‘cerebrovascular disease’. The plural needs correction throughout the text.
2. Abstract – method of analysis using Stata does not need inclusion here; be consist in terminology ‘female’ rather than adding ‘women’ throughout; $p<0.05$ does not need inclusion when ‘significant’ is included
3. Please explain what ‘triplopia’ is?
4. Please elaborate on the data entry and quality control procedures. ‘Data were entered and then verified by two separate data entry operators’. What does this mean?

5. CVD is first introduced in the statistical analysis section but then defined in the Results. This needs changing.

6. It would be nice if there was any assessment of disability/functioning to include in Table 2