Reviewer's report

Title: Psychiatric disorders and clinical correlates of suicidal patients admitted to a psychiatric center in Tokyo

Version: 2 Date: 27 September 2010

Reviewer: Morten Hesse

Reviewer's report:

This is a descriptive study of the frequency of patients who are hospitalized after suicidal behaviour in a Japanese psychiatric hospital. The main finding of the study seems to be that the patients who are there for psychiatric treatment are more psychiatrically severe than patients identified through other sources such as general medical units and ERs. This is a somewhat trivial statement. I would expect only the more psychiatrically ill patients among people with suicidal behaviour to enter psychiatric inpatient care.

Major compulsory revisions:

The authors need to state clear hypotheses about their material.

One example of such a hypothesis could be:

Based on previous research into the life-cycle specific impact of life events, we hypothesized that younger subjects were more likely than older to experience negative life events prior to hospitalization for SB.

Many more hypotheses can be made, based on both the literature reviewed in the article, and based on other literature. The present approach seems to be "correlate at random", and does not make sense from a scientific point of view. The reference to bonferroni corrections in the analyses section is strange: "where appropriate". When and where are these corrections appropriate? And why?

The authors need to clarify the instrument used for the assessment of suicidal behaviour for this study. If this is an unpublished instrument designed for this particular study, much more description of the items, their wording and coding is needed.

The authors also need to describe the classification of patients into 19 categories. How were subjects assigned to categories? Statistically? Based on some kind of theory?

The sub-division of the Suicidal Intention Scale into 15 items representing severity and 2 representing recent substance use. Is this based on someone else's work, or was it done for this study only? If so, why?

The discussion starts with this statement:

"Apparently, the most salient feature of the subjects of the present study was that they all had psychiatric disorders."
Had the authors conducted a study of patients on an oncological ward, would they start the discussion by stating that "Apparently, the most salient feature of the subjects of the present study was that they all had cancer."? These are patients in a psychiatric ward, and should definitely have psychiatric disorders.

In the discussion, I am surprised to be presented with relevant issues, such as the relationship between life-cycle and the significance of life events.

Minor compulsory revisions:

Abstract:

This word "suicide intension" - I think this should be suicidal intent. In "linguistics, logic, philosophy, and other fields, an intension is any property or quality connoted by a word, phrase or other symbol. In the case of a word, it is often implied by the word's definition. The term may also refer to all such intensions collectively, although the term comprehension is technically more correct for this." (Wikipedia, accessed September 2010). Intent is not the same.

Conclusions: "Distinctive features" - compared with what? Other suicidal patients from other settings? Other psychiatric patients? Please clarify this, so that the abstract is understandable by itself.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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