Reviewer's report

**Title:** Post-hospitalization course and predictive signs of suicidal behavior of suicidal patients admitted to a psychiatric hospital: A 2-year prospective follow-up study

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 27 August 2012

**Reviewer:** Michael Anestis

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In this manuscript, the authors prospectively examined predictors of suicidal behavior reoccurrence amongst individuals hospitalized for suicidal behavior in Tokyo. The study involved a number of notable strengths, including the prospective design, a relevant clinical sample, and the administration of structured diagnostic interviews. Concerns are noted below:

- The introduction (background) section should be much longer. In fact, a substantial portion of the citations in the discussion should be moved to the introduction, the purpose of which is to describe the literature within the relevant area, build a case for the incremental value of the present study, describe the study’s hypotheses, and briefly discuss the implications of data supporting those hypotheses. This introduction did not accomplish this.

- The definition used for suicidal behavior is very broad and seems to encompass an extremely broad variety of behaviors, including non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI). Because of this, the outcome variable is overly vague, lumping behaviors that share some similarity with suicidal behavior but differ in important ways (see the work of Meuhlenkamp, Nock, and others for more detailed information on this point). The broadness of terms that lump in such a range of disparate outcomes into a single variable is problematic within the field of Suicidology and has prompted efforts to develop a more clearly delineated nomenclature. If the authors are to include NSSI within their definition of suicidal behavior, their background section needs to include a discussion of research relevant to that outcome and they must justify its inclusion in this manner while acknowledging findings that make that decision somewhat problematic. For more information on new terminology, see:


- Why did the authors not utilize survival analysis? Given the impressive use of multiple follow-up assessments across 24 months, the authors have the data to not only predict dichotomous reoccurrence status, but also length of time to reoccurrence, which seems highly relevant to the purpose of this paper.
• Given the nearly universal global tendency for females to attempt far more often than men and for men to die by suicide at a much higher rate than do women, the authors should spend more time discussing the potential impact of biological sex on the results of this study, as they had an almost evenly divided sample.

• The authors need to discuss other variables not measured in their study that might have had an impact on the results (e.g., variables from Joiner’s theory, access to means, etc.).

• There was very little discussion regarding potential mechanisms driving the findings. In other words, the authors noted a number of relatively stable characteristics associated with reoccurrence of a maladaptive behavior, but did not discuss why that relationship might be there and how interventions might mitigate that risk. Given that the list of variables predictive of the outcomes (e.g., particular diagnoses and demographic variables) was consistent with prior research, this study really needs to provide a firmer theoretical basis for the findings to really justify incremental validity for the findings.

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no completing interests