Reviewer’s report

Title: Spatial clusters of suicide in Australia

Version: 2 Date: 7 May 2012

Reviewer: Kenneth Morrison

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Review of Spatial clusters of suicide in Australia
May 7, 2012

1. The question is clear in the introduction – “The spatial pattern of suicide clusters has not been investigated in the whole Australia to date”.

2. The methods used are reasonably appropriate and well-defined. A more detailed description of spatial cluster analysis would be helpful. An expanded age group of 15 to 49 or 15-54 would be more appropriate as suicide remains a leading cause of death of both males and females age 45-54. Better yet would be two age groups – 15-34 and 35-54 as the factors associated with suicide in these two groups may be quite different. With so few female suicide deaths at the SLA level, the use of this methodology for female suicides is questionable. However, the greatest strength of this study is applying the method to other conditions – particularly mental health.

3. The data are sound with large overall N from a national source. Unfortunately, the data are dated (10 years old) and therefore of limited practicality to current targeted prevention planning.

4. Relevant standards for reporting are followed. The map figures with enlarged sections aid considerably with interpretation.

5. Limitations – unfortunately of which there are several – are clearly stated.

6. The authors acknowledge the previous Queensland study upon which they are building.

7. The abstract should mention the age group presented in the findings.

8. The writing is clear and easily read.

Discretionary revisions:
Expanding the age group as noted in point 2 above

Minor essential revisions:
The labelling of the figures needs to be clear (at first glance).
Label Figures 2 and 3 in the same manner as Figure 1. For Figure 2, A: Radius 100 km, b: Radius 400 km; for Figure 3, A: Age 15-44, Radius 100 km, B: Age
15-44, Radius 400 km

**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 that I have no competing interests