Reviewer's report

Title: Risk Factors for Suicide in Hungary: a Case-control Study

Version: 1 Date: 12 January 2009

Reviewer: Alexander McGirr

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Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. The major methodological issue in the current study is the mixed proxy-based and directly obtained nature of controls' assessment. While the psychological autopsy method is well validated, the method is subject to differing sensitivities and biases, which the authors indirectly acknowledge when discussing the reference time used in controls. In other words, it is problematic that only 34% of controls were assessed using the proxy-based techniques with which the cases were assessed. To remedy the situation, I suggest that the authors offer the reader an additional level of information: providing information and analyses restricted to the sample ascertained using proxy-based interviews in addition to the analyses currently presented in the manuscript. Consistent results emerging from both analytical approaches will lead to greater confidence in the findings.

Minor Revisions:

2. In the limitations, the authors provide a reference to national statistics to which they compare their sample on the basis of demographics and methods used. Ideally, a comparison would be provided between potential cases retained and not retained in the final sample. In the event that this is not possible are statistics available specifically for Budapest?

3. Please provide information relating to the delay between time of death and when the informants' interview took place.

4. Does lifetime history of psychiatric illness refer to a history of illness prior to those present during the reference date? If so, this should be specified in the text to avoid confusion (i.e. 43.5% lifetime psychiatric diagnoses vs. 69.1% any diagnosis during the reference period).

5. It would be more appropriate to refer to affective disorders in the discussion where it is currently referred to as major depressive disorder, since the variable employed reflects more than just major depressive disorder.

Discretionary Revisions:

6. The information available on informants gives the authors an interesting opportunity to contribute to the literature on the validity of the psychological autopsy method. I would recommend that the authors provide some data with respect to the influence of informants’ age, gender and relationship to the
deceased, as well as time delay prior to the interview on the rates of variables of interest. I believe this would be a worthwhile addition and strengthen the manuscript.

**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.