Reviewer's report

Title: Filicide in Austria and Finland - A register-based study on all filicide cases in Austria and Finland 1995-2005

Version: 1 Date: 13 October 2009

Reviewer: Dominique Bourget

Reviewer's report:

This retrospective study reviews cases of filicide in Austria and Finland over a 10-year period. The title reflects the work and the methods are adequately described.

In the Abstract section, the author could replace “hidden” by some other expression at that early stage, so that the reader would have a better understanding of the intended message.

Under the Method section:

• First paragraph, second line from the bottom: the given range of 60-90% is quite broad. It would be a good idea to comment on this and provide further details as to how offenders are selected for a forensic psychiatric examination.

• On page 5 of the manuscript, the authors refer to the legal defence of “neonaticide”. The paragraph needs rewording. Also, it should perhaps be noted that in some countries (e.g. Canada), the Criminal Code provides for a defence of “Infanticide”, referring to similar concepts. It would be worthwhile to raise these points in order to clarify the use of the terms and show that there are differences internationally.

• Last paragraph beginning with “In both countries...” on page 5 requires rewording / reformatting for easier reading.

Under the Discussion section:

I recommend a rewrite of the discussion section, keeping in mind the following comments / suggestions:

• A better delineation between the literature findings and the actual results obtained in the authors’ study.

• A more in-depth discussion, examining the differences in clinical diagnoses between male and female perpetrators, in the distinctive countries.

• Some of the results alluded to in the discussion could be elaborated in greater details in the Results section.

• It may be problematic to include non-biological parents. Given the fact that they do not contribute significantly to the total number, I suggest they either be removed or alternatively that more details be provided to see whether they offer a
different profile from the biological parents.

Figures 1 and 2 do not add much to the paper and could be removed.

**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:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.