Reviewer's report

Title: Predictors of mortality among elderly people living in a south Indian urban community; a 10/66 Dementia Research Group prospective population-based cohort study

Version: 1 Date: 8 January 2010

Reviewer: Hajime Iwasa

Reviewer's report:

I have checked the manuscript "Predictors of mortality among elderly people living in a south Indian urban community; a 10/66 Dementia Research Group prospective population-based cohort study". This research explored factors associated with mortality among older adults living in an urban community in south India, and found age, gender, social integration, physical activity, nutrition state, mental diseases, disability and self-rated health were independently related to mortality. These findings may have possibilities to contribute to steady progress in the research area. Especially, findings regarding independent relationship between undernutrition (not overnutrition) and mortality were important to facilitate meaningful intervention strategies for older adults living in community. However, the present version of this manuscript has weaknesses which should be overcome. Attention to the issues below would significantly strengthen it.

<Major Compulsory Revisions>

(1) I read the Background section and felt it is somewhat unclear. The authors should consider modifying the section to make it more concise and easier to understand. Some suggestions to improve the Background section are set out following.

(1-1) The authors may delete the first sentence of second paragraph ("Factors associated with mortality in late-life can be subsumed into five domains; ~ health behaviours and health status."; page 1, line 9), because it is not essential in the paragraph. The authors should emphasize the absence of findings related to predictors of mortality in LMIC instead.

(1-2) I wonder whether South Korea is LMIC (page 1, line 19).

(1-3) I think that the difference in risk factors for mortality between younger and older people may not be needed (page 1, line 22), because the issue seems to be unessential in the article and the present study did not examine the topic directly. I believe that the issue regarding the difference in findings between developed countries and LMIC is more significant and should be emphasized.

(1-4) The first sentences of the fourth paragraph are not needed ("In summary,
the large majority of deaths worldwide occur in LMIC, ~ associations observed among older people more developed settings may not generalize to LMIC."; page 2, line 15), because they are overlapping with the former paragraphs.

(2) I read the Discussion section and also felt it is somewhat unclear. The authors should consider modifying the section to make it more concise and easier to understand. The authors should write only one issue in each paragraph. Some suggestions to improve the discussion section are set out following.

(2-1) In the second paragraph of the Discussion section (page 7, the second line from the bottom), the authors addressed two issues (regarding "the effect size for male gender", and "the parsimonious predictors of mortality"). Each issue should be assigned to proper paragraph separately.

(2-2) The authors may want to state the below topic as a limitation in other paragraphs ("1) it is likely that we underascertained diabetes, stroke and ischemic heart disease at baseline ~"); page 8, line 15), I think.

(3) The authors should modify the Conclusion section. In the Conclusion section, the authors wrote three issues regarding undernutrition (page 9, line 3), dementia (page 9, line 8), and finally conclusion of this study. However, it is somewhat unclear. The author, therefore, should divide the section into three (or more) parts, and move the issues about undernutrition and dementia into other paragraphs in the Discussion section.

<Minor Essential Revisions>

(4) The authors need to insert citations regarding mortality rate of India and USA (page 6, line 5-7).

<Discretionary Revisions>

(5) The authors should show what the term "MV" in tables stands for.

(6) The authors should insert page numbers in the bottom of each page.

(7) The authors should check errors in references (for instance, reference #19, 22, 32).

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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 competing interests.