Reviewer’s report

Title: Changes in regional variations in the leading suicide method in Taiwan: a surge in charcoal-burning deaths from 2002 to 2008

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Reviewer: Vladeta Ajdacic-Gross

Reviewer’s report:

This is a concise brief report about the change of the leading suicide method in cities / counties of Taiwan in the 2000’s. In addition, this report provides descriptive information how the change has progressed in different sex and age groups. It illustrates the growing importance of charcoal burning suicides in Taiwan and the urgence of preventive measures.

Major issue:
• The authors should comment on the choice of the period 2002-8 for their analysis. It is not clear why it starts in 2002 and not before. It is also not self-evident why the analysis relies on congruent 3-year periods in order to demonstrate the change of the leading suicide method. The choice of the time windows appears to be somewhat arbitrary.

Minor issues:
• Some readers might appreciate more detailed comments and interpretations about the differences between younger and older age groups with respect to the change of the leading suicide method. Why were the charcoal burning suicides not contagious for the older age groups? Is that a question of availability or acceptability?
• The last sentence of paragraph one from page 11 (“In conclusion …”) includes too many "different" words.
• There are some minor orthographical issues.

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.