Reviewer's report

Title: Drug suicide: a gender-equal cause of death in 16 European countries Or Intentional drugs overdose kills men and women equally: a study of 16 European countries

Version: 1 Date: 24 November 2010

Reviewer: Martin Voracek

Reviewer's report:

This ms. is due to a collaborative effort of a consortium of well-known, excellent researchers in suicidology. The data and lines of evidence reported therein are novel, newsworthy, interesting, and do have clear public health implications (suicide prevention). Among other things, an important conclusion of this paper is that the ICD coding system for overdose suicides is in need for a revision. One drawback is that the data available for this series of analyses (not hitherto publicly available, but beneficially included in the tables accompanying this report) are not really up-to-date (2000-2005). On the other hand, this shortcoming is explicitly acknowledged under study limitations. Specifically, I was especially impressed with the thoughtful and extensive elaboration in the Discussion and Study strengths and limitations sections.

All in all, there is little to quibble with this ms., as it currently stands.

Minor essential revisions:

The double title is unusual, to some extent, awkward, and not really necessary. Please reconsider and aim for a more concise title.

Please substitute females and males with women and men and gender or gender differences with sex and sex differences (throughout the ms.).

On p. 8, 1st full para, 2nd sentence suicide attempts (instead of suicides) seem to be meant, if I am right (since the theme discussed in this passage is parasuicide, not completed suicide).

P. 10, para 1, sentence 1: I conjecture the authors mean that the distribution of suicide rates across the lifespan (age brackets) is "not uniform" (instead of: "not linear") - because there is no "linear distribution", but the uniform distribution is well-known.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.