Reviewer's report

Title: Trends in solids/liquids poisoning suicide rates in Taiwan: a test of the substitution hypothesis

Version: 1 Date: 3 March 2011

Reviewer: Paul Yip

Reviewer's report:

major compulsory revisions:
The authors have provided useful data set to illustrate the substitution hypothesis of solids/liquids poisoning suicide rates in Taiwan, they argued that the reduction of s/l poisoning was not compensated by the rise of other methods.

However, if there is a general reduction of number of suicides for the period 1983-1993, but the magnitude of the reduction among the major methods are not the same. Can some of the suicide people who originally plan to use the method and now change to other methods. It could be the reason why the magnitude of reduction was not as much as observed by the S/L poisoning. I think it is important to examine, the age and gender composition at least within the other method and/or hanging to see whether there is any significant change in the distribution. It will give us some idea whether substitution has indeed taken place.

I think it can done by examining the age-gender proportion of the methods. also there are always be some substitution it is just a matter of degree hence it might be better to say that only limited substitution takes place rather than nothing occurs.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.