Reviewer's report

Title: The pesticide story: Taiwan suicide rates, 1985-2009

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Reviewer: Jing Wu

Reviewer's report:

Compared to first manuscript, the second one is more topic-focused. Authors comprehensively described the changes of pesticides suicide rates as well as other poisoning suicide rates in Taiwan and also made a comparison between the changes of suicide by pesticide and other methods. This manuscript offers an overview of pesticide suicide in Taiwan during two decades to researchers on suicidology both from Asian regions and other Western countries.

Minor essential revisions:

1. In the whole study, study implications, strengths and limitations were ignored. Authors are suggested to discuss a little bit about these points.

2. As to methods, in ‘Data sources’ part, at the end of paragraph 2 the authors mentioned that other solid or liquid poisoning (ICD-10, codes X65-X66). Actually according to WHO ICD-10, here, other solid or liquid poisonings are codes X65 and X69, except pesticides (X68) and drugs (X60-X64). X66 belongs to poisonings by gas. Authors would better check the ICD-10 list and decide which codes should be categorized here.

3. In table 2, the item of ‘pesticides’, correspondingly, ICD-10 codes were written as X67 & Y17. However, in terms of WHO ICD-10, intentional self-poisoning by and exposure to pesticides is code X68 and poisoning by and exposure to pesticides, undetermined intent is code Y18. Likely, the item of ‘other methods’, correspondingly, ICD-10 codes were written as Y21-E34. In terms of WHO ICD-10, it should be Y21-Y34.

4. About wording, authors mentioned ‘marked political unstable’ several times (in abstract part; in discussion part, paragraph 6; in conclusion part). But this expression is adjective, inconsistent with ‘series measures of pesticide control’ and ‘economic recession’ and so on, which are nouns. ‘Marked political unstable status/condition’ might be suggested to use. Another mistake is in discussion part, in the section of ‘the pesticide story in Taiwan after 1993’, authors pointed out that relatively few elderly males used this novel suicide method and preferred of using traditional method (pesticide) to kill themselves. This sentence seems not to be logical by content. It would be ‘relatively few elderly males used this novel suicide method and most elderly males still preferred using traditional method (pesticides)’.

Discretionary revision:
1. In discussion part, in the section of ‘the pesticide story in Taiwan after 1993’, authors pointed out that ‘there was an obvious method substitution of using charcoal burning as a suicide method but relatively few elderly males used this novel suicide method and preferred using traditional method (pesticide) to kill themselves’. Here, could authors stress a little on the reasons why only this age group (65+, males) still choose pesticides as main suicide method compared to other age groups, especially when charcoal burning is used so frequently as suicide method. If the kind of knowledge could be discovered and illustrated a little, discussion part would be more informative.

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

**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.