Reviewer's report

Title: Infant Mortality and maternal age in two Sicilian districts: a retrospective study.

Version: 1 Date: 15 March 2011

Reviewer: Bukola Fawole

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Infant mortality and maternal age in two Sicilian districts: a retrospective study

Major compulsory revisions

Introduction

1. Authors may remove the first objective. The third objective needs to be revised. For example, it will read better if stated as "To assess determinants of infant mortality .......

Methods

1. Authors seem to have mistaken neonatal mortality rate (NMR) for perinatal mortality rate (PMR). Post-neonatal mortality rate will be deaths of infants occurring after the first 28 days.

Results

1. Authors reported the Poisson regression model to be significant at p = 0.05. What is the cut off point for statistical significance?

2. Authors used Odds Ratio and Risk ratio (not Rate ratio!) in this study. By convention, it is customary to use one estimate of effect. Please utilize only one estimate of effect throughout the report i.e. either Odds Ratio (OR) or Risk Ratio (RR).

Discretionary Revisions

Methods

1. Page 6. The statement 'The ReNCaMs of Palermo and Messina identified all deaths during the first year of life.......in 2004-2006' is ambiguous. Perhaps Authors meant to report that 'We identified all deaths in ReNCaMs of Palermo and Messina .......

Results

1. Authors should include the standard deviation whenever mean values or averages are reported.

2. 95% Confidence Interval is usually abbreviated as 95% CI.

3. Authors should standardize the number of decimal points. Please use either one or two decimal points consistently in the manuscript.

References
Authors should ensure that references conform to Journal style. Please use standard journal abbreviations for journal names.

Minor Essential revisions

Introduction/Methods
1. First paragraph. Review reference [8(m) – 10].
2. Health for All, 2009. Is this a reference?
3. The phrase ‘pregnancy health care system’ may be replaced with ‘organization of antenatal care’.
4. Authors may express the term ‘largest latitudinal area’ differently.
5. The term decedents may be replaced by ‘infants’ or ‘dead infants’ or ‘deceased infants’

Results
1. Authors may wish to write 286 in words.
2. The first sentence of the third paragraph is not clear i.e. ‘The IMR ratio was 1.63 (95% CI: 1.25 – 2.09), ……..

Discussion
1. ‘Malformation related to deaths’ may be changed to ‘malformation-related deaths’.
2. The last sentence on the first page of Discussion could be revised particularly the use of the word ‘determined’.
3. Change the term ‘assisted procreation’ to ‘assisted conception’.

Acknowledgements
Review the first sentence.

Table 2
Change cerebrum-vascular to cerebro-vascular.

Figure 1
Review and ensure that all boxes are fully written.