Reviewer’s report

Title: Ethnic and Gender Specific Life Expectancies of the Singapore population, 1965 to 2009 - Converging, or Diverging?

Version: 1 Date: 5 August 2013

Reviewer: Naoki Kondo

Reviewer’s report:

The authors calculated the life expectancy at birth and 65 years old by gender and three major ethnicities in Singapore. As far as I know, data on the gaps in life expectancy between ethnicities are new in that county. However, the manuscript lacks important information to be reported as an original peer reviewed paper. The importance and purpose of this paper are not described clearly. The paper lacks international perspectives. Please see my specific comments below.

Major Compulsory Revisions

#1 Methods section did not include necessary information to be reported. For example, information with which readers can evaluate the accuracy of the data used should be reported: eg, definitions of ethnicities, % of population and death counts dropped from these registries. To secure the inclusion of necessary information, I think the use of a checklist such as STROBE should be helpful.

#2 Methods. Explain the reasons why and for what the authors additionally used the National Health Survey data. The detailed of that survey should also be needed.

#3 Results: The authors reported that there was persistent gaps between ethnicities on life expectancy. But no data on the magnitude of the gaps have not been reported.

#4 I did not see any descriptions on ethical consideration.

Minor Essential Revisions

#5 Background section fails to explain the importance of this paper. For example, why the description of life expectancy gaps across ethnic and gender groups are important? What are potential implications in international perspectives?

#6 Please explain the rationales of the use of WHO definition of the groups I-III on death causes. For example, in the discussion section, the authors mainly discuss about the ethnicity gaps in life expectancy in terms of the share of deaths that were amenable/modifiable and not amenable/modifiable. This is not directly linked with the the WHO categorization.

#7 Results: I think the results for gender-combined data are not necessary. All results should be gender stratified.
#8 Discussion: The first half of discussion section is like results section, with unnecessarily long summary of results and additional descriptions of more results. Please reorganize the manuscript.

#9 Discussion and Conclusion: related to my comment for Background section, what is the implication of this study for public health and for the readers from the world?

Discretionary Revisions

#10 Page 12, second paragraph: to understand the impact of the misclassification due to immigrations and registration missing, the data on secular trends in immigrants from China, India and surrounding countries should be reported. Discuss about the magnitude of the bias based on those data.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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