Reviewer's report

Title: Interventions to reduce suicides at suicide hotspots: A systematic review

Version: 2 Date: 17 December 2012

Reviewer: Ruchi Bhandari

Reviewer's report:

Strengths:

Overall: Paper does a systematic review of a very useful topic: Interventions to reduce suicides at suicide hotspots. It reviews the studies on availability and effectiveness of interventions to reduce suicide at hotspots. The review is concise and explicit. The data are sound; title, abstract, methods, results and discussion are acceptable.

Page 4: This paper uses a strong study design to have excluded those studies that only measured post-intervention suicides.

Page 23-24: Table 1: "PRISMA Checklist" is very helpful. If there is space constraint, it can go in as an Appendix.

Pages 25-28: Table 1: "Studies on interventions at suicide hotspots" gives a comprehensive and succinct view of the studies included.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Page 3: Since the authors used only one database - Medline, there is a potential for search bias that may severely affect the kind of studies and the number of studies found. The authors acknowledge this as a limitation, but mention "resource constraint" as a reason.

Since the authors are affiliated with academic institutions, would it not be possible to search other important databases as well?

2. Page 5: With respect to the findings, consideration was given to changes in the number or rate of suicides at the hotspot site and at comparison sites where these were available.

Please specify what is meant by "consideration."

3. Page 6: In these cases, we took the conservative approach of regarding the different papers as relating to the same study to avoid double-counting of any observed impacts. (19 papers, 14 studies)

Please specify whether multiple publication bias was avoided by only including data from the most recently published study.

- Minor Essential Revisions
Pages 25-28: Table 1: Studies on interventions at suicide hotspots should be changed to: "Table 2: Study characteristics and results." In the last column, it might help the reader get a quick overview if the authors just wrote the pre- and post-intervention suicide numbers instead of the detailed text.

- Discretionary Revisions

Page 14: Publication biases may have operated, such that positive findings about particular interventions were more likely to have appeared in print than negative ones. If the authors wish, they can do a funnel-plot analysis to determine the extent of publication bias in this study.

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest 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.'