Author's response to reviews

Title: The socio-environmental determinants of railway suicide: a systematic review

Authors:

Lay San Too (tiffany.too@monash.edu)
Allison Milner (allison.milner@unimelb.edu.au)
Lyndal Bugeja (lyndal.bugeja@monash.edu)
Roderick McClure (Rod.McClure@monash.edu)

Version: 7 Date: 22 December 2013

Author's response to reviews: see over
Review of manuscript titled
‘The socio-environmental determinants of railway suicide: a systematic review’

We are pleased to know that three of the reviewers have accepted/recommended our manuscript for publication. We would like to thank all the reviewers for their valuable comments and time.

Dear Dr Karolina Krysinska,
Thank you so much for your further comments. Please find our responses to your comments below.

1. Table 1: two categories of studies have been introduced: “non-intervention studies” and “intervention studies”. In the text other categories of studies/results have been presented: railway environments, population characteristics, and media reporting. Could the authors revise the Table to match the Results section? Also, the phrase "the event" has been used in the Table. Could the authors specify "the event" or use other phrase?
   **Response:** Thank you for this comment. We could not present the table to match the results section because some studies examined both railway environments and population characteristics but not exclusively either of them. However, we have added the sentence “Eight studies were non-intervention studies while the other three studies examined the impact of an intervention on railway suicide” on page 7. In the table 1, “the event” has been changed to “railway suicide incident.”

2. Please, add references where necessary, for example, page 13, 2nd paragraph, add refs 36 and 37. Please, also provide reference for “ecological fallacy” (page 11).
   **Response:** Thank you for this comment. The references 36 & 37 have been added on page 13, 2nd paragraph. Reference for “ecological fallacy” has been added on page 11.

3. Several phrases or sentences should be revised, for example, page 7, “The remaining study was a quasi-experimental” and “The socio-environments studied fell into…”. Page 10, “Media impact”, please clarify the sentence starting with “The study found that suicidal behaviors…”. Page 11, Discussion, edit sentence starting with “Both of these approaches…”. I am not sure why the term “social media reporting” instead of “media reporting” has been used (page 5). Limitations, 2nd paragraph, please, revise the
comment regarding exclusion of studies of temporal variations, especially “However, this was not so much a limitation…” (page 14).

**Response:** The phrases or sentences have been revised as the following:

- Page 7, “The remaining study was a quasi-experimental” to “The remaining one study applied only quasi-experimental method.”
- Page 7, “The socio-environments studied fell into…” to “The socio-environments studied were categorised as railway environments, population characteristics and impact of media reporting.”
- Page 10, “Media impact” to “Impact of media reporting”
- Page 10, “The study found that suicidal behaviors…” to “The study found that in Germany, suicidal behaviours on the railway increased significantly after 28 days, approximately two months, and two years following the railway suicide incident.”
- Page 11, “Both of these approaches…” to “A causal relationship between exposure and outcome variables cannot be inferred from results of studies using these designs”.
- Page 5, “‘social media reporting” to “media reporting”
- Page 15, “However, this was not so much a limitation…” to “This review did not include studies that examined temporal variations (i.e. seasons, days of week, time of day, and day or night time) because they were defined out of scope.”

4. The readers might be willing to learn more about the effective “blue lights” and “barriers” interventions (refs 36-37). Could the authors present these interventions in more details? Also could they provide a description (or examples) of “(ir)responsible media reporting of (rail) suicide”?

**Response:** Thank you for this comment. We have added “platform screen doors (i.e. total barriers between the station floor and ceiling that screen the platform from the train)” and “blue lights (i.e. blue light-emitting—dieode lamps stay on from sunset to sunrise)” on page 8. On page 11, we have added “the irresponsible media reporting of railway deaths (e.g. details on the suicide method are given).”

5. In Conclusions it is not clear why the authors chose to focus on alcohol outlets and alcohol consumption levels as variables for future studies.

**Response:** We would like to clarify that “alcohol outlets and alcohol consumption levels” are just examples/suggestions for future studies but not the focus. We have added “e.g.
number of alcohol outlets and level of alcohol consumption in a geographical area because alcohol consumption may play a role in railway suicide [41, 42].”

6. A bold suggestion for future research would be indicating the need to introduce uniform measures of variables related to the railway network infrastructure and train traffic (see Summary, page 12).

Response: Thank you for this suggestion. We agree with you and happy to put this for future research. We have added “There is also the need to introduce uniform measures of variables related to the railway network infrastructure and train traffic that are considered as important such as standardised measures for quantity of track length” on page 14.

Additional editorial requirement:

- In accordance with BioMed Central editorial policies (http://www.biomedcentral.com/about/editorialpolicies#StandardsofReporting), could you please ensure your manuscript reporting adheres to PRISMA guidelines (http://www.prisma-statement.org/) for reporting systematic reviews. This is so your methodology can be fully evaluated and utilised. Can you please include a completed PRISMA checklist as an additional file when submitting your revised manuscript.

Response: We have included the PRISMA checklist as additional file 1 in the text.

- Please also ensure that your revised manuscript conforms to the journal style (http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/ifora/medicine_journals). It is important that your files are correctly formatted.

Response: The authors have made sure that the revised manuscript conforms to the journal style.

Warm Regards,
All authors