Reviewer's report

Title: Females don't have more injury road accidents on Friday the 13th

Version: 1 Date: 19 August 2004

Reviewer: Francesca Valent

Reviewer's report:

General

The study investigates the possible association between Friday the 13th and increased injuries due to road accidents in Finnish females. There have not been many studies on this topic; for this reason this article is very interesting. I have some comments, particularly on the interpretation of the results.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

None

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

None

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1) The authors claim that "One of the most spread superstitions is that Friday the 13th brings bad luck". I am not sure whether it is true all over the world, therefore the authors should add "in Finland".

2) In the last paragraph of the Background, the authors state that they replicated the study by Nayha, however the methods they used are different so I would suggest not to use that term.

3) In the first sentence of the Conclusion the authors say that "This study did not show any differences in any aspects of injury accidents ...". That is not true. In fact, their results did show an increase in the number of accidents, injuries and deaths on Fridays the 13th, both in males and in females. However, such increase is not statistically significant according to the test that they used for the analysis. I would suggest changing the sentence into "This study did not show significant differences in any aspects...". I also suggest adding "significant" in the Results sentence of the Abstract.

4) For the same reason, I would suggest changing the first sentence of the last paragraph of the Conclusion ("We conclude that females do not have more injury traffic accidents ...") into something like "We do not confirm that females have more injury traffic accidents..."

5) In the same sentence of the Conclusion, the authors suggest that Nayha's result on fatalities is
due to random variation. In reality Nayha’s study is quite precise (the confidence interval for the 1.61 estimate being 1.15-2.21), so chance (i.e. random variation) is an unlikely explanation for the result. I think that more plausible explanations for the inconsistency between the findings of the two studies may be represented by having used different data sets and having conducted different types of analyses and statistical tests.

6) Were information on age available from the Finnish road accident data base of injury accidents? If so, maybe it is worth doing some analysis stratified by age.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests: None