Reviewer’s report

Title: The Regional Differences in Prevalence, Medical Expenditures and Risk Factors for Injury in Taiwanese Teenagers

Version: 2 Date: 28 November 2005

Reviewer: Roderick McClure

Reviewer’s report:

This study provides useful information regarding regional differences in the prevalence of injury and associated risk factors among Taiwanese teenagers. In terms of the public health response to the problem of injury, the contribution of this paper is to provide broad, essentially descriptive information about the nature and extent of the problem within a circumscribed population. It does not make an important addition to the identification of risk factors, inform the development of interventions, nor facilitate the development of effective public health programs. It is difficult to see how the relatively low level of detail available to the researchers in the database, could have lead to anything but relatively non-specific findings. Furthermore, the generalisability of the findings of this research beyond the study population is somewhat limited.

However, the paper however is well conceived within the limits of its aims and methods. The methodology is strong and the presentation is clear, well structured and informative.

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

The researchers note that 80% of residents in mountainous areas are aboriginal. Is the finding that there is an increased prevalence of injury in mountainous regions (and a difference in outcome and cost) simply a statement about the distribution of injury (and other health conditions) in aboriginal populations? If so then this is a finding consistent with most indigenous communities throughout the world and is a product of complex social circumstances not covered by the variables that were examined in this study. The ability of the data/methods chosen (given the inherent limitations in this data) to adequately address the chosen research question needs further justification.

The paper really needs to concentrate more on what it is adding to the literature. This focus should begin with a stronger rationale for doing the research, drive the analysis and presentation of results and strongly determine the content of the discussion. The current vague discussion highlights the difficulty the researchers have in identifying what the paper adds to knowledge. The discussion goes beyond the data to conjecture explanations to support general recommendations. A clearer link between rationale for the study, study results and study conclusions is vital.

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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)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests