Reviewer’s report

Title: Effect of socioeconomic status on three-year mortality after first-ever stroke: Nanjing Stroke Registry

Version: 1 Date: 24 May 2006

Reviewer: Moira Kapral

Reviewer’s report:

General
This is study evaluating the association between socioeconomic status (SES) and 3-year mortality after stroke in China. The results will be of interest to researchers in this area.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. The analysis is based on data from a hospital-based stroke registry linked with information on SES. It would be helpful to have information on the quality of the data sources. Is there likely to be any misclassification bias?
2. In the multivariable analysis, only some of the measures of SES were correlated with outcome. The authors should discuss why there might be a discrepancy in the findings based on the measure of SES.
3. Additional discussion around potential explanations for the association between SES and stroke outcomes, particularly in the Chinese setting, would be welcome. It would also help to know more about the usual delivery of stroke care in China, and potential barriers based on SES.
4. The stroke registry was consent-based, which may have led to selection biases. Can the authors provide additional information on how the registry patients compared with typical stroke patients in their area?
5. The authors used individual-level measures of SES. A comment on the relative merits of individual vs. area-level SES measures (particularly in China) would be helpful.

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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)
The abstract and text need some grammatical editing.

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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 whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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.