Reviewer's report

Title: Life time suicidal thoughts in an urban community in Hanoi, Vietnam

Version: 1 Date: 4 November 2005

Reviewer: Jukka Hintikka

Reviewer's report:

General

Epidemiological studies on suicidal process are still needed to better understand where we should focus our preventive efforts which warrants this study.

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

Abstract: Time span for the prevalence rates should be mentioned (life-time?). Furthermore, life-time prevalence rates presented in abstract are different than those presented in Table 2.

Introduction, page 4, first paragraph. Estimated suicide rate presented for Vietnam is extremely low and compared to the findings of this study it is suggested that there are nearly 150 suicide attempts for one completed suicide during per year. Is this correct? If not, should be corrected. If the figures are correct, this should be discussed.

Data collection: I wonder whether very high participation rate is due to the fact that first contact was by the staff of the municipal People Committee; in other words people may have thought that have duty to participate. More discussion is needed.

Statistical analyses, page 6, last sentence. "...prior knowledge." Previous studies or preliminary analyses? Should be clarified and references added if needed.

The authors have to present some grounds for their conclusion that the time lag from the plan to the suicide attempt is short in Vietnam. I did not find any of them because this is cross-sectional study and there is not any time variable in analyses. If there are no grounds for this conclusion, it should be omitted.

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

Legends for table 3 and 4 could be "Risk factors for suicidal thoughts". In addition, these tables could be connected. It would be easier to understand the results if the results of univariate analyses (crude odds ratios) and multivariate analyses (adjusted odds ratios) were in same table.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Discussion, page 10, third paragraph: "...how rate...", possible this should be low rate.

I am not native English speaker but I think that in some places language checking is needed.
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.