Reviewer's report

Title: The Impact of Fathers' Physical and Psychosocial Work Conditions on Attempted and Completed Suicide Among their Children

Version: 2  Date: 10 January 2006

Reviewer: Gustavo Turecki

Reviewer's report:

General

The article is well written, as well as very clear and succinct. The design is interesting, limitations are, for the most part, properly acknowledged and the authors’ conclusions do not greatly overstep their findings.

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

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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)

1) It should be acknowledged that father’s health service encounters, though controlled for, is incomplete. Fathers’ health service information only reflects encounters from 1985-2001, and thus represents a smaller proportion of the fathers’ lifetime (and thus a proportionately smaller window for the manifestation of latent suicidal tendencies or impulse discontrol psychopathology) than children’s. Moreover, for a large portion of the fathers (according to Hertzman et al (1997) the sawmill cohort would have been, on average, 50 years of age in 1985), predispositions to suicidal behaviour or alcohol abuse may have manifested themselves prior to 1985. Therefore, though the authors have controlled for fathers’ suicidal behaviour and alcohol abuse disorders during the 1985-2001 window, they have not demonstrated that fathers’ physical and psychosocial work conditions are associated with children’s increased risk for their suicide independent of fathers’ suicidal behaviour and mental health; this limitation should be acknowledged and sections (i.e. abstract and discussion) where this is implied should be reworded.

2) I recommend that the authors provide p values in the tables.

3) Though the writing is, for the most part, strong, several simple grammatical errors that will require very little adjustment, caught my eye (eg: the first sentence of the abstract’s results section reads ‘[…] suicide history of father’s prior to […]’ while the second makes odd use of punctuation; point numbering is inconsistent, beginning with 1) and then b), p8); the authors say that senior workers filled out Karasek’s questionnaire for basic job titles for three time periods when it would appear that they did so for only two time periods, p8; typos such as ‘confirmed’ rather than ‘conformed’ p9).

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1) With respect to methods, I would recommend that the authors remind the reader that a full history of employment, including participation in other economic sectors, is not required as a father’s single
exposure to adverse employment may impact health outcome through ‘latency’ or ‘pathway’ routes.

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential 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.