Reviewer's report

Title: Measuring the tail of the dog that doesn't bark in the night: the case of the national evaluation of Choose Life (The National Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent Suicide in Scotland)

Version: 1 Date: 3 April 2007
Reviewer: Gustavo Turecki

Reviewer's report:

This paper covers an important subject of public health concern. The paper is well written and is easy to follow.

Major Compulsory Revisions:
I would like to point out below two major issues that could be addressed by the authors, which would improve the overall quality of the paper:

First, it would be of interest for international readers to be informed of what were the main goals and an overall description of the National strategy and action plan to prevent suicide. It would be useful to provide this information in the introduction (maybe as a schema), before presenting the challenges of the evaluation process on pages 5-6-7-8 and Table 1.

Second, since this paper is related to the evaluation of the first phase of this National strategy, I would suggest for to the authors to present briefly the main findings of the first phase of this evaluation in the revised paper. This might be presented on page 12. Although this information is already mentioned as a web site (12) in the References section (Report of the Evaluation of the First Phase of Choosing Life, written by the same authors), it is my opinion that this should be summarized in the revised paper. This way, readers would get a better taste of this comprehensive approach, which is the main goal of this paper.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.