Reviewer's report

Title: Stages of development and injury: an epidemiological survey of young children presenting to an emergency department

Version: 1 Date: 11 February 2008

Reviewer: William Pickett

Reviewer's report:

I was flattered to have the opportunity to review this manuscript, which took an idea generated in our Canadian-based analysis and extended it to a similar surveillance initiative in Scotland. The results are quite helpful, in that they provide an element of "generalizability" to the developmental patterns that we both have come up with. I have a few minor revisions to suggest, but in general I found this to be an interesting and well-written article that is a helpful contribution to the pediatric literature.

Discretionary Revisions

Abstract. The concluding sentence is perhaps overstated a bit, given the fact that these are descriptive findings only and not studies of interventions.

Page 3, para 2. I generally prefer the expression "risk for injury" rather than "risk of injury" ... similar to "risk for heart attack".

Page 3, para 2. Last sentence. I would call these "changing mechanisms" or "changing external causes" rather that "causes", as the latter implies that you know everything about the etiology of the injury event.

Page 4, para 4. Did you have an a priori strategy for the division of the children into different age groups by developmental stage? If so, state this.

Page 5, para 1. In the methods, please (if you wish) provide the method used in the generation of confidence intervals around rates. Second, I would not make Figure 1 optional, as it is quite a powerful figure when combined with the Canadian results.

Page 7, para 2. The suggest that Canadians are affluent is not an evidence-based conclusion; indeed, significant portions of our population are quite poor. If you are going to make that inference, then back it up with some evidence (or remove it).

Page 9, Acknowledgements. CHIRPP Canada is run by the Public Health Agency of Canada. This is a government department, and they don't have a "hospital" - I'm not sure who you are referring to when you say the "clinical effectiveness staff and senior management of the hospital", or CHIRPP Canada (it doesn't exist!). If you want to acknowledge CHIRRP in Canada, then acknowledge either the Public Health Agency of Canada, or the Kingston sites of
the CHIRPP system in Canada, something like that.

Figure 1. I like this figure as it shows the consistency of the results between countries. It might be helpful to replace the points on the chart with actual ages, as this is very confusing. Even better, find a way to superimpose confidence intervals surrounding each estimate.

**What next?:** Accept after discretionary 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