Reviewer's report

Title: The area-based social patterning of injuries among 10 to 19 year olds
Changes over time in the Stockholm County

Version: 1 Date: 18 November 2007

Reviewer: Elizabeth Mary Louise Towner

Reviewer's report:

General
This paper examines whether area-based social patterning of injuries remains over time in young people aged 0-19 years.

Injuries in children and young people are an important public health problem internationally. This is an area where there are strong links with economic deprivation but the mechanisms for those linkages are often unclear. It is therefore important that greater attention is given to an examination of the association of a range of factors related to deprivation. Here the authors attempt to disentangle the effect of neighbourhood material deprivation and social fragmentation on different injury types among boys and girls between time period 1 (1993-1995) and time period 2 (2003-2005) in parishes in Stockholm county in Sweden.

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

(1) The main problem with this article is that it is unclear to the reader what the overarching hypothesis is and why it is important - the whole article has to be read before this becomes more transparent. The problem is more that of the clarity of presentation, rather than the analyses that have been conducted. It would be useful if the overall hypothesis and justification for the hypothesis are set out at the end of the Background section (page 5). Then it would be useful for a set of component questions to be posed, building up the picture and leading the reader of the article though the explanation. For example, these could include the following: (however the authors may wish to change the wording of the individual questions)

Have injury rates changed over time for the two different age groups of young people?

Are there differences related to different injury types: intentional and unintentional and to different mechanisms of injury?

Are there differences related to gender?

Are there differences related to economic deprivation in the parishes between
time period 1 and time period 2?

Are there differences related to social fragmentation in the parishes between time period 1 and time period 2?

Do the two area based aspects related to the social fabric of a neighbourhood (economic deprivation and social fragmentation) have an individual and independent association with different injury causes?

For each question in turn, the tables need to be used to report the results and interpret the findings.

(2) There is a considerable body of literature related to health and place, which examines the ways in which the attributes of places have an effect on people’s health (for example place as a portion of geographic space, physical/environmental attributes of places and place as an area to which people attach certain meanings and action). Some of the explanation for the findings in this paper could perhaps be obtained from such studies. This paper does not refer to the broader geographical literature.

(3) The paper is also not clear about what can be learnt from the study – what can the academic researcher glean from this?

(4) How can the results be applied – what practical implications does it have?

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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)

On page 15 the authors say: “the analyses were conducted under the assumption that residential mobility does not vary between parishes”. How can this assumption be justified? It would seem highly likely that residential mobility would vary over the time period of this study.

The authors use the terms ‘over risk’ and ‘under risk’. It is not clear what they mean by this. Does this mean ‘less than expected’ and ‘more than expected’?

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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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests