Reviewer's report

Title: Impact of Socio-Economic Factors on Stroke Prevalence among Urban and Rural Residents in Mainland China

Version: 2 Date: 27 January 2008

Reviewer: Virasakdi Chongsuvivatwong

Reviewer's report:

I am satisfied with most responses of the authors, which are clear and reasonable. However, there is an important points that I do not agree with the explanation and I strongly suggest the authors to reconsider my request seriously.

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS

I have suggested the authors to analyse the data by taking into account that more than one subjects could come from the same family and thus share several independent variable, especially FAI which is the authors' main interest. The authors responded that family identification variable was not available.

I re-read the report and felt that this may not be the case.

1) The authors added in their revision: "There were 15,563 families approached and 15,300 households responded in this survey." If they do not have family identification, where did these numbers come up? Manual counting is unlikely for this huge sample size.

2) In the sampling process: Invitation was at household level as mentioned in the text: "All households of the selected villages were invited to participate in the study." and "Informed personal and family consent was obtained before each household interview."

And in the questionnaire: "The household was based on the family unit in this study." and information on ".number of family members, total monthly income of family." was obtained.

The words: 'family consent' and 'household interview', 'based on the family unit' and variables at household levels ..... suggested that the questionnaire had the household level information. it is hard to believe that the household identification variable was missing.

In conclusion: I would like to request the investigator team to revisit the data, either in the computer file, or in questionnaire paper to identify or create the household identification field by all means and recompute the data using multi-level modelling with at least nesting on household level.

The coefficients and standard error (and 95% CI) of the SES will certainly
change. The discussion section will then need to be revised accordingly.

DISCRETORY REVISIONS
The discussion section is too long (7 pages). The authors may re-write more succinctly without losing important contents.

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: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests"