Reviewer's report

Title: Predictors of Poisoning-Related Fatality: A Hospital-Based Prospective Study

Version: 2 Date: 3 May 2007

Reviewer: Nick Buckley

Reviewer's report:

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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)

The main quibble I have with this paper is the lack of detail on the completeness of data collection. That is it would be good to have a copy of the specific form used for data collection and the extent to which there were missing data for each field.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Prospective studies of poisoning admissions can be very useful and may serve many different purposes - identifying problematic poisons, providing evidence to guide diagnosis or prognosis, providing data on the natural history of particular poisonings etc... One of the issues with such databases is quite a lot of data on patients has to be collected to come up with new findings. So the authors are reporting on two years worth of data from their centre. They seem to have done a good job of collecting and analysing the data and the results should help them guide their practice and priorities for public health interventions. Unfortunately, there is not that much in this paper to grab the interest of readers from elsewhere. The main broad conclusions - i.e. that paraquat is very toxic, that old age and abnormal vital signs on admission indicate a worse prognosis - are not new findings. Moreover, the specific quantified odds ratios may not be applicable elsewhere - e'g the strong association of respiratory abnormalities with death might only apply in areas where paraquat is a leading cause of death (for further explanation see Buckley NA, Dawson AH, Whyte IM. Diagnostic Data in Clinical Toxicology: Should We Use A Bayesian Approach? Journal of Toxicology - Clinical Toxicology 2002;40(3):213-222.)

This is not to say this study shouldn't be published - it should - but the authors should give some thought to how they might in this or future studies make the presentation of their data more relevant and applicable to a wider audience

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: 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'