Reviewer's report

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

Version: 3 Date: 7 August 2007

Reviewer: Dexter Tagwireyi

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

The author must respond to these before a decision on publication can be reached. For example, additional necessary experiments or controls, statistical mistakes, errors in interpretation.

1. None

- Minor Essential Revisions

The author can be trusted to make these. For example, missing labels on figures, the wrong use of a term, spelling mistakes.

ABSTRACT & BACKGROUND

1. None (article now reads very well and makes the reader to see what is ahead)

METHODS & RESULTS

1. Authors to remove the word 'and' on the subheading on page 7 - to read 'Study Design, Setting, and Selection of Study Population'

2. Authors need to define what their definition of "Within a Short Time After Discharge" under the subheading Outcome Measures in the Methods Section (page 9). A short time could be two days for me, yet it is one week for someone else and a month for yet another person. Thus the definition will have implications on how someone will interpret the results presented.

3. Also in line with point 2 above, it would be interesting to the readers to know what proportion of patients died in the hospital and what proportion died "within a short time after discharge" - a statement or two could be put in the results - and depending on how significant the differences are, the authors may have to explain in the discussion reasons why. (If this data is not available, then this should also be stated in the paper for reasons of correct interpretation).

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Answering these questions in the discussion would make the paper more interesting reading to other scientists

1. Why is deliberate self poisoning the predominant cause of admission in your
setting? - speculate

2. Why do the authors think that medicines (drugs/pharmaceuticals) predominated as a cause of hospital admission or presentation to the ED? One would expect such a picture from Europe or North America - why did your results show this pattern? You did mention that another study in Taiwan reported this, but why - one would expect more of pesticides than drugs...

- Discretionary Revisions

These are recommendations for improvement which the author can choose to ignore. For example clarifications, data that would be useful but not essential.

Please note that both the comments entered here and answers to the questions below constitute the report, bearing your name, that will be forwarded to the authors and published on the site if the article is accepted.

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