Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Assessing the Disease Burden of Yi Population by Years of Life Lost in Rural China

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 31 March 2009

**Reviewer:** Yunfei Lao

**Reviewer’s report:**

**Major Compulsory Revisions:**

1. The purpose of assessing the disease burden of Yi Population is not described clearly. There is no information to show the difference of Yi people and Han people in general context of Shilin (Han people is the major nationality group in Shilin County, even in Yunnan Province and China), and the necessity to analyze the disease burden of Yi people based on the findings of previous observational study or local specific phenomenon on disease occurrence.

2. As there was the study on YLL due to premature death in the year of 2003 in Shilin (see the reference 4 of manuscript), the manuscript should involve the data or results of the previous study into the background part to indicate the linking with it from the methodology or something else.

3. In terms of the study population, the proportion of Han people in total population and the numbers of deaths of Yi people and Han people in 2003 in Shilin are not showed.

4. In discuss part, there is not analysis on the cause of different disease burden between Han people and Yi people.

**Minor Essential Revisions:**

1. The background part and introduce part should be combined. The first three sentences and the fifth sentence in the manuscript are the same as in the website --http://www.ynda.yn.gov.cn/ReadNews.asp?NewsID=522, if they are cited from this website, it should be included in the reference. But I donnot think this content and citation relating with Yi langue are necessary to emphasize the special feature of Yi nationality.

2. In the part of “study populations”, I do not think “All individuals residing and dying in 2003” should be included in the analysis as the result that there were deaths of other nationality groups except for Yi and Han in Shilin.

3. In the part of “Calculation of YLL and mortality rate”, the 2nd sentence “ In globe burden of disease studies , YLL incorporates an age-weighting factor so that life……” is almost repeated in the third paragraph.

4. The formula of YLL looks very complex, but when K is assigned a value of 0
and the r is assigned 3%, it seems simple, and the simplified formula should be written.

5. In the part of “Results”, the resource of “The average life expectancy at birth was 70.8 years (95%CI: 70.0-71.5) in Shinlin county” is not clear.

6. As the age is continuous variable, in the table 1, the expression of age group should use the low limit and upper limit. The low limit is an exact number, but upper limit is not, such as 0~, 5~, 15~, 30~, 45~, 60~, 70~, 80+

7. The table 2 showed that the disease of maternal condition in terms of YLL/1000 population was higher for men than for women both in Yi and people and Han people. The author should explore the possible causes.

Discretionary Revisions:

As the evidence strength of YLL results is related with the death register system, though the death causes were verified, the author did not mention the baseline assessment of local death registry system, the pitfall may be existing.

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: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.