Reviewer's report

Title: A Closer Look at the Increase in Suicide Rates in South Korea from 1986-2005

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Reviewer: Karl H Ladwig

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Review

The paper analyses total mortality and suicide data over the time span from 1986 to 2005 in South Korea. In contrast to many (may be most) countries of the world, Kwon et al. show a substantial increase in suicides rates corresponding with a decrease in total mortality. The paper provides a most interesting and valuable insight in the mortality situation of a far-east country.

However, there are some shortcomings which need to be addressed:

1. Introduction

The authors do not present a thorough state-of-the-art concerning time trends and socio-economic changes as possible effect modifier. References cited in the paper seem to be somewhat accidental. For example, Baumert et al. provided findings and a critical review of the literature on this issue which might be useful to look at:


2. Methods and findings

Why did the authors choose a 0-79 years band? Suicides in children luckily are an extremely rare event – however, prevalence rates increase substantially in the very old ones.

The major concern with the paper is the complete lack of a statistical method to calculate the significance of the possible trend under observation.

Which statistical package did they apply?

The authors do not discuss a potential influence of undetermined death on the long term trend. Authors should discuss this point.

3. Discussion

Also see introduction

The authors make mention of the Hyo – seems interesting, however, is hard to understand when you are not familiar with the topic.

4. References

In detail, a rather inattentive and inhomogeneous way of citation.