Reviewer's report

Title: A study of home deaths in Japan from 1951-2002

Version: 3 Date: 5 January 2006

Reviewer: Siew Tzuh T Tang

Reviewer's report:

General
Description of this revised manuscript is much clearer then the previous one.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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 authors attributed the changes in the trend of home deaths occurred at middle of 1960’s, end of 1980’s and middle of 1990’s to the establishment of new medical and social care facilities. However, at the introduction section, the authors indicated that there are only a small proportion of people died neither at home nor hospitals as the reasons why modeling place of death was only focused on home versus hospital. Therefore, the speculation of reasons for changes in the trend of home deaths needs to be further validated. At least, the proportions of deaths at health services facilities for the aged and special home for the elderly should be provided to justify the explanations.

2. Introduction of new payment system for medical care used by elderly was attributed as the reason for decline of home deaths during 1970s. However, the statement “This policy reduced the possibility of an increased usage in medical health resources among the elderly.” seems contra-intuitive.

3. Home death rate by prefectures in 2002 should be the “dependent variable” in the multiple regression analysis and utility, availability of health care services and living environments should be the “independent variable”.

4. The results of correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis should be presented in Table 4 and 5 instead of Table 3 and 4.

5. The number of beds in hospital, dwelling rooms, and families in which the elderly living alone and ratio of daily occupied beds in general hospital should be included in the multiple regression as step 1~4 rather than model 1~4.

6. Reconstructing the Table 5 as conventional table for presentation of multiple regression.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No