Author's response to reviews

Title: Changes in mental health services and suicide mortality in Norway: an ecological study

Authors:

Håkon A. Johannessen (hajn@fhi.no)
Gudrun Dieserud (gudrun.dieserud@fhi.no)
Bjørgulf Claussen (bjorgulf.claussen@medisin.uio.no)
Per-Henrik Zahl (per-henrik.zahl@fhi.no)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr Christopher B. Forrest,

We are pleased that you, in principle, will accept the manuscript for publication in BMC Health Services Research. In this second revision, we have further improved the manuscript in response to the comments made by the reviewers. In addition, the manuscript has now been edited by San Francisco Editing according to the BMC Health Services Research guidelines.

A point-by-point response to the reviewer’s comments follows:

**Reviewer: Dr. H Bickley**

1) Dr Bickley wrote: “Methods, paragraph 10: 5th word should be ‘data’ not ‘date’”.

Answer: We have now corrected this error in the RM, p 8.

2) Dr Bickley wrote: “Results, paragraph 1: ‘the number of outpatient consultations increased by …221%’. This does not match with the rate ratio within Table 1 in the 5th column/outpatient cons. Row. This may be a rounding error, but the (3.22) should perhaps be (3.21), to match the 221%?”

Answer: We made a rounding error (267/83=3.217). We have corrected this error to 222% in the RM, p 9.

3) Dr Bickley wrote: “Results, paragraph 2: the text refers to Table 5, but there is no Table 5”.

Answer: We have now corrected this error (RM, p 9).

4) Dr Bickley wrote: “Discussion, paragraph 3: change ‘theses’ to ‘these’”.

Answer: We have now corrected this error in the RM, p 12.

5) Dr Bickley wrote: “Discussion, paragraph 4: perhaps change ‘shortage’ to ‘shortcoming’”.

Answer: We have changed the word as suggested by Dr Bickley (RM, p 12).

6) Dr Bickley wrote: “Tables 1-4: don’t abbreviate ‘cons.’ or ‘consul.’ – write in full”.

Answer: We have now made changes in the tables as suggested by Dr Bickley.

**Reviewer: Dr. Wahlbeck**

1) Dr. Wahlbeck wrote: “In table 1, rate ratio for outpatient consultations is 3.22, but in the Results section of the text (page 9) the corresponding number is 221 %”.

Answer: We made a rounding error (267/83=3.217). We have corrected this error to 222% in the RM, p 9.

2. Dr. Wahlbeck wrote: “Tables 3 and 4: abbreviation "IRR" needs to be explained”.

RM refers to Revised Manuscript. All changes in the revised manuscript are written in red.
Answer: We have now explained the abbreviation in the two tables.

3. Dr. Wahlbeck wrote: “Discussion section, page 11. The authors say "....the number of discharges increased by 113 %...., which can be explained by the decline in the number of inpatient days". This does not seem plausible, as both "beds" and "bed-days" decreased at the same rate. The increase in discharges must thus be due to a shorter average length of hospitalization periods”.

Answer: We have now changed the text to: “Despite the observed decline in hospital beds, the number of discharges increased by 113% during the study period; this apparent discrepancy can be explained by the decline in the average length of hospital stays [12]” (RM, p. 11).