Author's response to reviews

Title: Injuries associated with housing conditions in Europe: a burden of disease study

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Version: 2 Date: 9 August 2011

Author's response to reviews: see over
Response to reviews of “Estimating the burden of home injury due to housing conditions in Europe”

Thanks to the editor and to the reviewers – all changes are tracked in the revised version of the manuscript. Our responses are indented and in italics below:

Editorial comments:
We have noted that on the title page the title should include the study design, for example "A versus B in the treatment of C: a randomized controlled trial X is a risk factor for Y: a case control study"; the phrase (corresponding author) should be removed after Dr. Keall's name; the symbols after the institutional addresses be replaced by sequential superscript numbers; the authors names be changed to normal font; the email addresses moved below the heading Email addresses and the phrase *Corresponding author inserted above the heading Email addresses with the * after the corresponding author's superscript number(s). In general please proof read the manuscript for typographical and grammatical errors e.g. page 11, poisons/medicines, etc. All italicized text should be changed to normal except where indicated in the references. In the Abstract, the headings should appear above the text and the colons removed. The first section of the manuscript should read Background, not Introduction, and a results section should be included after the Methods section. The wording indicating where the tables should be inserted should be removed. On page 11, there appears to be a reference. If so, format it like the others or remove it. At the top of page 15 please remove the manuscript title. Above the Competing interests section insert a List of Abbreviations listing the abbreviation:term and separating the pairs with semi-colons in sentence format. Please properly word the last sentence of the Authors' contributions as shown in the Instructions for authors i.e. All authors read and approved the final manuscript. The References should be formatted as number, period, space (not tab) and reference and the issue numbers removed. Please be sure that the page references are correctly formatted.

We have edited the paper according to all the above

Reviewer's report
Title: Estimating the burden of home injury due to housing conditions in Europe
Version: 1 Date: 10 July 2011
Reviewer: bridget kool
Reviewer's report:
Dear authors
The objective of this paper was to estimate the European burden of injuries in the home that can be attributed to remedial structural hazards. The authors suggest that lack of window guards and domestic smoke detectors resulted in an estimated 7,500 deaths and 200,000 DALY’s per year. The study has used well established methodology and the findings are clearly presented. The resulting estimates have contributed to the limited body of knowledge in this area. However, I think the paper would benefit from some revision/clarification.

Major compulsory revisions:
1. Introduction: Overall I found this section to be too long and too detailed (4 pages). Some elements are surplus to requirements, others could be condensed, and others would sit better in the Discussion section of the paper. Specific feedback follows:
   1.1. Paragraph 1: Unnecessary
   1.2. Paragraph 3: Sentence 2 not required. Sentence 3 and 4 – abbreviate and combine.
1.3. Paragraph 5: I don’t think this is necessary except sentence 1 which could appear at the end of the Introduction section “The aim of this paper is to quantify the housing –related ......”
1.4. Paragraph 6: last sentence redundant
1.5. Paragraphs 7 & 8: too much detail. Tables 1 & 2 not required information could be summarised in a couple of sentences
1.6. Paragraphs 9: 2nd to last sentence would sit better in the Discussion.
2. Methods: All the essential elements are clearly described however, again there is information that is either surplus or could be described more succinctly. Specifically:
2.1. Paragraphs 4 & 5– Methods for measuring exposure to lack of smoke detectors. These next 3 paragraphs could be summarised more succinctly Tables 3 & 4 are redundant. E.g. “Information on the prevalence of domestic smoke detectors is available from a range of sources including.... estimates range from x% to x%.
2.2. Paragraphs 6 & 7– Limitations for examining other injury hazards...: These next 2 paragraphs fit better in the Discussion.
2.3. Paragraphs 9 to 11 – Total burden of disease from certain types..: Paragraph 9 begins “the figures for deaths...”Again could be condensed e.g. Delete 1st sentence.

We have carried out all the above edits as suggested.

I don’t think Table 5 is necessary,

We have left the table in as these are unpublished figures and they illustrate aspects of the uncertainties involved in forming the estimates.

paragraphs 10 & 11 could be consolidated and considerable abbreviated.

3. Results: Overall these are clearly presented.
3.1. Paragraph 1: 1st sentence What does the “above” in the this sentence relate to?
3.2. Last paragraph: I would state what the annual estimates are - as you have done. The latter points re the estimate being an underestimate fits better in the Discussion.

In fact, the Discussion already has text to this effect, so we deleted this altogether from the results section.

Minor essential revisions:
Be consistent with the age category definition for children e.g. 0-14 years vs. < 15 years

All done!

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Reviewer's report
Title: Estimating the burden of home injury due to housing conditions in Europe
Version: 1 Date: 24 July 2011
Reviewer: Hossein kazemeini
Reviewer's report:
Introduction is very long

The introduction is now considerably shortened

In results we cannot see any regional or international comparisons

This study is the first of its kind, to our knowledge, so there are no international comparisons that we could make.

No year of reference in the title

Again, as this study is unique, pinning the study down to a year of reference does not seem valid. As with all burden of disease studies, they are as much about the methods as about the estimated burden, as the latter is very strongly dependent on the former. So we would prefer not to put a year in the title. (Also, as described in the paper, the health data and exposure data vary in terms of the years they refer to, so this also makes it difficult to assign a year).

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.