Reviewer's report

Title: Deaths of infants subject to forensic autopsy in Estonia in 2001-2005: What can we learn from additional information?

Version: 1 Date: 14 April 2010

Reviewer: Kaire Innos

Reviewer's report:

The paper is well written and deals with a very important topic, particularly in view of the very high childhood mortality from injuries in Estonia. Furthermore, this paper reveals that this mortality rate is still underestimated.

Minor essential revisions:

1. The second sentence of the second paragraph of Results does not state that the percentages are among diseases and not among all causes of death, please clarify.

2. In the same paragraph, the word „disease“ before „congenital malformations“ is inappropriate.

3. It is not clear whether the first paragraph of page 10 conveys information from death certificates or medical records, please clarify.

4. The last paragraph of the Results section repeats information presented elsewhere in Results and Discussion, the authors should consider removing it or adding new information.

Discretionary revisions:

5. Instead of figure 2 and some text in Results, I would suggest presenting data on the manner of death in tabular form for the total study population as well as by age groups (number and percent of cases). It would also be useful to see information on the evidence of child abuse and preventable deaths by age group (the data could be incorporated in the same table). Since the number of cases is very small in two older age groups, it might be better to collapse them into one category.

6. Also, it would strengthen the point of the paper if the authors were able to provide current intentional injury mortality rate in infants in Estonia and an estimate of what the rate of intentional injury mortality would be, if the deaths were classified „correctly“, and how these rates compare with respective rates in other countries. I believe such numerical estimates would help the decision makers to see the magnitude of the problem more clearly.

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.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.