Reviewer's report

Title: Trends in Cause and Place of Death for Children in Portugal (a European Country with no Paediatric Palliative Care) during 1987-2011: a population-based study

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Reviewer: Oscar Zurriaga

Reviewer's report:

It is an interesting topic to study. The methods selected for the authors are appropriate. There are some questions to clarify:

Objective (page 3, line 83): it is needed to clarify if the aim is descriptive or analitic. The authors said: "to examine the epidemiology of paediatric deaths in a country without PPC, understanding trends in cause and PoD and determining which disease related, socio-demographic and environmental factors are associated with HD in CCCs". But the conclusions are not completely related to this objective because the factors determining the HD after the study are still not clear. I think it would be better to say: "To examine the epidemiological situation of paediatric age deaths in.....[], describing trends in cause and PoD and other related factors with HD in CCCs: disease related, socio-demographic and environmental".

Type of design: The authors said "epidemiological population-based study of mortality data" (page 4, line 86) but they didn't categorize the type of design. I think it is a cross-sectional study.

Methods: Cause of death (page 4, line 91). The acronym ICD is used but previously is not explained (and it is not in the list of abbreviations in page 12). The right way is: "International Classification of Diseases 9th revision (ICD-9)".

Results (page 5, line 123): Maybe a calculation of the infant mortality rate would better than the absolute numbers to express the decline.

Results (page 5, line 139): the sentence could be rewrite because it is not clear.

Results: the authors use "odds" for "odds ratio" (page 7, lines: 195, 196, 197 and 198; page 8 lines: 205, 206 and 211). I think the right way it is to use "odds ratio" the first time and "OR" after.

Discussion (and Abstract) (page 8, line 215; page 2, line 47): The authors said "In this first, to our knowledge, time-series analysis...". This is not a "time-series analysis". They analyzed time trends but they did not a time-series analysis.

Discussion (page 11, line 290): What about the non-specified mortality causes? I think the authors have to analyze (using references) what happened with this non-specified causes. It is relevant for their study.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

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