Reviewer's report

Title: Occupational skill level differences in suicide mortality: Evidence of changes over time and during the Global Financial Crisis in Australia.

Version: 2 Date: 12 April 2015

Reviewer: M.S. S Bhatia

Reviewer's report:

General Comments
• There is need to reorganize some portion of manuscript and avoid repetition of information.
• Current manuscript is mere the presentation of census from Australian Bureau of Statistics and NCIS classifying suicide by occupation.
• A note about employment/unemployment data during study period and how it changed during GFC in Australia would be more useful

Specific Comments
Title:
There is no need of word “mortality”.

Abstract:
The words, “small increase”, “larger increase” need to be avoided (mention exact data). Aims: Need to be redrafted. Results: Specify the word “widening disparities”

Keywords:
They need to be rearranged (Suicide, financial recession, occupation, gender) ; The words- “socio-economic gradient, skill level, intentional self-harm” need deletion as they were not part of study.

Introduction:
Page 3:
# Line 2: Global Financial Crisis needs to be defined, especially in context to developed countries like Australia.
# Line 4 – mention unemployment among skilled/semiskilled/unskilled.
# Line 6 – Define the word, “economic shocks”.
# Line 9 – Omit word, “disparities”

Method
Page 3
# Line 23 – Correct word, “occupational skill level”. The word “occupation type” is a better word as a person highly skilled may have been in semiskilled/unskilled
page due to economic compulsions.

Page 4:

# Heading, “Coding of occupation for suicide rate” can be shortened

# Results:

Page 5:

# Lines 25-29: Rearrange (in text) occupation according to suicide rates (in a descending order). The occupations mentioned are not as per suicide rate shown in Table 1.

# Line 31: Omit word, “effects” after “The main.. model”.

# Line 34: Rearrange (in text) occupation according to suicide rates (in a descending order). The occupations mentioned are not as per suicide rate shown in Table 2.

Page 7:

# Lines 1-2 mentions shortcoming of study. It should also be mentioned in limitations.

# Line 5: Why there was a fall in suicide rate in 2009

# The different occupational factors in different genders over the years 2007 to 2009 and also the differences among subgroups need elaboration. The other factors e.g. job not as per skill (Job Drift), decline in family income (financial drift), mental health issues, psychosocial factors, job attrition could have played a role.

Discussion

Page 7:

# Lines – 18 -19: The GFC was associated with skill level disparities but the details of these disparities were not mentioned/ studied by the authors.

# Page 8:

# Line 8: Was there an association between qualification or skill with type of employment?

# Lines 14-16: Delete mention of differences in depression, suicide ideation and suicide attempts [19] as they were not studied by the authors (or mention HERE that the cases with suicide ideation or attempts were not analysed. This can be mentioned under LIMITATIONS.

# Lines 25-31 – Job drift would have been a factor as GFC causes attrition in high skilled or salaried jobs and it also varies from country to country. The rise in suicide rate in lower skilled may be because their number had actually increased during GFC or there may be decline in highly skilled jobs/workers during GFC.

# Conclusions:

# Lines 23-24: There could have been decline in family income or decline in quality of life becoming a stress factor for suicide.

Future Directions:

# Mention future suggestions for police makers and mental health professionals
as GFC may again come back.

References:
# Need corrections e.g. 9,19,25
# Add recent studies correlating suicide and occupation

**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:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

No competing interests