Reviewer's report

Title: Causes of suicidal behaviors in men who have sex with men in China: a national questionnaire survey

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Reviewer: Maria Luiza Santana Amaral

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions:
1) Abstract: Methods: write number in full. This is repeated in the last paragraph of the article.
2) Background: the paragraph “The reasons.... similar to the severity of mental disorders in SM.” – in MSM. In the same paragraph the term “... are not fully understood” is repeated - reformulate.
3) Discussion: twice, Ma et al are cited within parentheses, where only the year shall show, review. Also, review repetition in paragraph “In this study, our survey analysis showed that romantic relation breakup with gay partner(s) was the single most important trigger of suicidal behaviors in MSM in China and 33.67% Chinese MSM involved in our survey had ever considered suicide when their romantic gay relationships were broken up (Table 1)”.

Major Compulsory Revisions:
1) Background: 1st paragraph talks about HIV, and fully understand the relationship between MSM and HIV, but in this article, the focus is not on HIV. The article would benefit from the inclusion of the context of previous findings concerning suicide in MSM and what are the main assumptions of the authors.
2) Methods: lack of inclusion and exclusion criteria. And how they got to the 5 questions of the survey? were based on an instrument? in opinion of professional experts?; as it was applied survey? participants were recruited at the bar and answered questions at the time of approach, or in an interview at another time? If it was approach was checked alcohol level in the blood, so as not occur bias?
3) Results: missing sociodemographic data such as income, education and work. How many answered “others”? What were the “others”? In the paragraph “In the 1530 respondents who responded to the question regarding suicide behaviors, 192 (12.55%) actually attempted suicide. Attempt was made once, two times and more than two times in 142, 34 and 16 respondents respectively”, what was the average age of the subjects in the attempted suicide and what are the main reasons?
4) Discussion: the paragraph “The second most important trigger of suicide behaviors... However, to our surprise, the survey data in this study showed that 120 (30.77%) out of the 390 MSM thought about suicide because they could not accept their homosexuality themselves. To our knowledge, we have for the first
time found that self-objection to their homosexuality is the second important reason for suicide behaviors in MSM in China.” Why the surprise? It was intended to be first? Not found in the Background basis for this discussion. It would be enriching that there were clearly addressing the limitations of the study; and also in what the findings imply epidemiological terms and future research.

5) Tables: (1) include "others". I suggest another table with the 192 subjects who had attempted suicide, how often and causes answered the next question. Include table with sociodemographic data.

6) Conclusions: the last paragraph of the article could supply the summary and be reformulated for conclusions.

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.