Reviewer’s report

Title: Impact of place of residence on place of death in Wales: An observational study

Version: 0 Date: 28 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Karen Forbes

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This seems to be a carefully carried out study of place of death in Wales according to age and deprivation using mortality data from the Office for National Statistics. The methods seem appropriate but are not always fully explained and the reporting could have been sharper. For instance lower super output areas (LSOAs) are introduced but not explained, and whilst standardised mortality rates are presented throughout, it is not until the second paragraph of the discussion that the fact that the mortality rates are reported per 1000 population per year is made clear.

The findings in general are unsurprising and mirror the fairly extensive literature from England. The fact that home deaths increase with deprivation is the opposite of the trend found in England and is interesting, and I think the possible reasons could have been expanded on in the discussion; pulling out some of the differences between England and Wales whilst acknowledging that further investigation will be needed.

I think the authors expand their conclusions beyond the data presented. Their dataset cannot tell them whether deaths within the Marie Curie hospice, Cardiff would otherwise have happened in hospital; it is possible they would have happened at home, and it seems odd to focus on a single hospice in Wales within the paper when there are hospices caring for patients at the end of life across Wales. The comments about distance from hospitals within the same paragraph seem more plausible.

I do not think the comment 'This is possibly due to a lack of access to palliative care in preferred locations, indicating the need for rational planning of policy' can be included in the abstract as this is pure conjecture.

The paper needs careful proof reading for grammar (principle instead of principal for example) and there are a fair number of extra and repeated words.

Table 1 that the SMR is deaths per 1000 population needs to be included. Figures 1 and 2 are clear and labelled adequately.

References are appropriate and accurate, but need to be left-aligned.

Overall a careful study which reproduces findings from England. The difference from England in relationship between deprivation and home deaths could have been discussed further, but conclusions should not go beyond the data presented.
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.
Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.
No

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