Reviewer’s report

Title: The incomparability of cause of death statistics under "one country, two systems": Shanghai versus Hong Kong

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Reviewer: Maigeng Zhou

Reviewer’s report:

This paper found a common existing problem in death cause registration and provide some valuable suggestion, it's of very importance for improving the quality of cause of death statistics globally. Some comments below:

1. From the GBD 2013 study, we have known the standardized mortality rate of Hong Kong is among the highest provinces in China, and it's even higher than Tibet and it's much lower than Beijing and Shanghai. This is odds and need to be studied. I think in introduction part, the author should mention this question.

2. The completeness of death cause chain(MCD) is an important factor to determine the UCD, we do not know how the difference between Shanghai and Hong Kong. Because Hong Kong is using the automatic encoding software (ACME) to determine the UCD, if only to fill in a direct cause of death without a complete death chain, then the UCD of septicemia, renal failure and pneumonia will be high; so in the discussion part, you should mention we should strengthen the standardized training of clinicians on how to fill in complete chain of death causes as far as possible.

3. Development a unified automatic coding system is of great significance to improve the comparability of different regions. Shanghai took the manual encoding way, but because the encoding is very complex, heavy workload and the differences between people, this is much difficult for the staff from middle and west of China, so Chinese version automatic encoding tool is worth to be developed to ensure consistency in encoding among different regions.

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