

Peer Review Report

Review Report on Avoidable mortality in Korea, 1997–2021: temporal trend and the contribution to all-cause mortality

Original Article, Int J Public Health

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

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EVALUATION

Q 1 Please summarize the main findings of the study.

This research is descriptive epidemiology tracking changes in mortality in Korea across a recent 2.5-decade period. It is simple, but important research. The authors conclude that public health policies made an impact on population health in Korea because the relative and absolute decreases in avoidable mortality were greater than the same reductions associated with treatable mortality.

Q 2 Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

No answer given.

Q 3 Please provide your detailed review report to the authors. The editors prefer to receive your review structured in major and minor comments. Please consider in your review the methods (statistical methods valid and correctly applied (e.g. sample size, choice of test), is the study replicable based on the method description?), results, data interpretation and references. If there are any objective errors, or if the conclusions are not supported, you should detail your concerns.

My only serious concern about this paper is that in many cases (the title, abstract, introduction, and especially the discussion) it suggests that the results are evidence that public health policies have had an impact on population health. This is not true. The authors don't do an analysis that is capable of finding a causal relationship. There are many things that could explain a large reduction in preventable mortality other than public health policies. This repeated assertion simply needs to change, leading to a slight reframing of the paper.

Other minor tweaks that could be addressed are:

- adding a list of the causes of death considered avoidable, preventable, and treatable to the appendix,
- adding more figures rather than so much reliance on tables,
- adding a thorough limitations section, and
- discussing the potential impact of COVID on the analysis.

PLEASE COMMENT

Q 4 Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

No. It suggests causal relationship, when the study does not test for a causal relationship.

Q 5 Are the keywords appropriate?

I don't think Health Policies should be a keyword.

Q 6 Is the English language of sufficient quality?

Yes

Q 7 Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

Yes.

Q 8 Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?)

No answer given.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Q 9 Originality



Q 10 Rigor



Q 11 Significance to the field



Q 12 Interest to a general audience



Q 13 Quality of the writing



Q 14 Overall scientific quality of the study



REVISION LEVEL

Q 15 Please make a recommendation based on your comments:

Major revisions.