OPEN PEER REVIEW

Open Peer Review (OPR)

As a new feature for progressing towards transparency, we decided to open a new window for all of our editors as well as authors titled "**Open Peer Review**". We hope by this new facility, our reviewers will be more motivated and authors will be more satisfied with the review process. We believe that publishing our peer review reports could make a transparent and clear environment for all our efforts within a journal, but not all reviewers tend to publish their comments.

What is "Open Peer Review" process?

An "Open Peer Review" process is making the details of all review process (including reviewers, associate editors, and EICs comments) as "Public" as it is agreed by EIC, Authors, and reviewers.

Advantages of "Open Peer Review" process

- More transparency, constructiveness and tactful comments of the peer review process: leads to an increase in the quality of reviews
- More motivations for all involved roles in the review process
- Authors' satisfactions from the review process: Increases honesty between authors and reviewers
- Education of both authors and new students
- Prevents reviewers from following their individual agendas and leading to the detection of reviewers' conflicts of interests

You can find out more at:
https://brieflands.com/briefland/knowledgebase/category/tree.html#opr.html

Health Scope
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Peer Review Report for "Investigation of the Relationship Between the Level of Fine Particulate Matter and Stroke Mortality Rate in Mashhad in 2014 and 2015"

Author(s): Sima Baridkazemi, Khalilollah Moeininan, Ali Taghipour, Ayat Rahmani, Hamidreza Nassehinia

Review Timeline:

Submit Date:	30 Nov 2019
Revised Date:	9 Feb 2020
Accepted Date:	27 Feb 2020

Revision (0)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | Revision (0) 9 Jan 2020

Dear AE,
My comments for the authors about the mention manuscript are as follows:
- Don’t use abbreviations in the Abstract section.
- Embed sections of abstract only in a section.
- In the abstract section, the Objective section is not necessary.
- Write the Objective at end of the introduction.
- Use past tense in “material and methods” and result in sections.
- You have used the effect of PM2.5 and the rate of stroke mortality while you have air quality index (AQI), Why don’t you find correlation between mortality and AQI. Are you sure that other contaminants don’t have a key effect on mortality?
- Revise the whole of the manuscript according to the instruction of the authors.
- S how R^2 on 2 figures.
- You claim that “The results show that there is a significant positive relationship between

PM2.5 pollutant and stroke mortality in Mashhad" while table 3 doesn't show this statement.
- There is not any description or discussion in the manuscript related to table 1.
- Discussion section needs to be improved and will be compared with other studies.
- Discussion section needs to be improved and compared with other studies
Best regards

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 10 Jan 2020

Dear AE,
The article is good in the title but is rejected for the following reasons.
The Discussion is very weak and there is no comparison with similar articles in the country.
The results are repeated in the discussion. materials and Methods are very poorly expressed.
Thanks.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (0) 11 Jan 2020

Dear EIC,
The manuscript is studied, and there are some comments which should be addressed by the author. According to the comments, the document needs major revision.
Kind regards,

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (0) 17 Jan 2020

Dear Author,
The reviewers' comments are mentioned. Please correct the details as mentioned above carefully according to reviewers' request.
Thanks.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Investigation of $PM_{2.5}$ changes correlation with the rate of stroke mortality in Mashhad, 2014-2015

1-Don't use abbreviation in Abstract section.

This item was corrected.

2-In abstract section, Objective section is not necessary.

We removed the objective section in abstract section.

3-Use past tense in "material and methods" and result sections.

These items were corrected.

4- Materials and Methods are very poorly expressed.

In this study, our aim was investigation of correlation between PM2.5 concentration and stroke mortality. So we used Pearson correlation after sorting and coding the data in the SPSS.

5-You have used the effect of $PM_{2.5}$ and the rate of stroke mortality while you have air quality index (AQI), why don't you find correlation between mortality and AQI. Are you sure that other contaminants don't have key effect on mortality?

Because particulate matter less than 2.5 μm in aerodynamic diameter ($PM_{2.5}$) is considered more harmful than particulates of other sizes. Therefore, studies of $PM_{2.5}$ have attracted more attention.

In our study, we just considered the relationship between changes in $PM_{2.5}$ concentration and the rate of stroke mortality, not impact of this pollutant on stroke mortality. Finally, we concluded that changes in $PM_{2.5}$ concentration have a significant relationship with changes in stroke mortality.

As the AQI index is the sum of PM, NO_2, CO, SO_2 and O_3 and the other hand, due to importance and increasingly increasing of fine particulate matter in the air (especially $PM_{2.5}$), our aim was to study these pollutants individually.

6- Show R^2 on 2 figures.

This item was corrected.

7- You claim that "The results show that there is a significant positive relationship between $PM_{2.5}$ pollutant and stroke mortality in Mashhad" while the table 3 doesn't show this statement.

Table 3 shows that there is a significant relationship between $PM_{2.5}$ concentration and stroke mortality in different months (P = 0.035) and different seasons (P = 0.003) in 2014.

8-There is not any description or discussion in manuscript related to the table 1.

The description related to the Table 1 is completed in the Results section and was discussed thoroughly in the Discussion section.

9- Discussion section needs to be improved and will be compared with other study.

The discussion part completed and our results were compared with more studies.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (1) 23 Feb 2020

Dear AE,
The authors have successfully addressed all comments; therefore the above manuscript can be accepted for publishing.
Best regards

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (1) 24 Feb 2020

Dear EIC,
The authors have successfully addressed all comments; therefore the above manuscript can be accepted for publishing.
Best regards

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (1) 27 Feb 2020

Dear author
The manuscript accepted for publishing.
Best regards