

Reviewer's report

Title: Local public health workers' perceptions toward responding to an influenza pandemic

Version: 1 **Date:** 4 January 2006

Reviewer: Robyn Gershon

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General

This is a thoughtful, well written and timely article. It explores an understudied topic of considerable interest, namely the responsiveness of public health workers to emerging pathogens (naturally occurring or terrorist-related). For a number of reasons, public health workers do not yet grasp the important role they may be called upon to play in large scale public health disasters. The authors have not only determined the intended responsiveness of Maryland public health workers, but the risk factors for lack of response. The significance of risk perception as well as lack of understanding regarding what exactly they would be expected to do in the event of a disaster is a wake-up call not only to local departments of health but to the national public health and security policy in general. This article could be nicely accompanied by an editorial which could point out some next steps to address these issues.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept without revision

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interests.