Reviewer's report

Title: Sampling and coverage issues of telephone surveys used for collecting health information in Australia: results from a face-to-face survey from 1999 to 2008

Version: 3 Date: 9 August 2010

Reviewer: Jeanette Ziegenfuss

Reviewer's report:

With respect to the use of the text that I provided in my previous review, by all means use it as appropriate in the manuscript. I am glad that you found it helpful. I have a few remaining comments that are listed below.

Minor essential revisions:

1. In the third paragraph of "data items" you define mobile only households as "...if mobile phones were currently being used by members of the household." Would it be more precise to say "...were currently being used by at least one member of the household"?

2. I still find the third paragraph of "results" confusing. Perhaps adding "of mobile only coverage" between "increased trends" and "were significant for a wide range of variables" would help clarify. A similar addition for the second sentence would also be helpful.

3. I think an important point to add to the discussion (that you do rightly include in the conclusion) is that the composition of the mobile only and unlisted population seems to be changing over time. For example, in later years, you would have a higher portion of young adults in the mobile only population (because the growth in this population was more than that for older adults).

4. I do not understand the third paragraph of the "conclusion." How is an impact "small" in relation to health estimates. Did you mean to say "the value of the health estimates" or something else all together?

Discretionary revisions:

1. In my last review (major point #3), I asked if you could comment on how large the overlap between those that are mobile only and those that are unlisted. What I was trying to get at was the extent to which those that are missing from the RDD frame (mobile only) are the same people that would be missing from a listed frame. I think a comment on the extent to which the same people may be missed with both would be an important practical discussion point.

2. In Australia, can individuals "port" their landline telephone number to a mobile phone as can be done in the US? If so, how might this impact the RDD frame?
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.