Reviewer’s report

Title: Illness mapping: A time and cost effective method to estimate healthcare data needed to establish community based health insurance.

Version: 1 Date: 6 July 2012

Reviewer: Manuela De Allegri

Reviewer’s report:

The manuscript is very well written, the concepts extremely well explained, and the content highly relevant. The discussion is excellent, addressing all the key relevant points. Formalising the use of qualitative techniques to derive information in illness mapping in a given region has important field implications which are of interest to those working in many health interventions, not just MHI. Therefore, the article definitely deserves publication.

I have one minor comment and one major question.

1. I would like to see a more detailed explanation of the household survey procedures, including num of households selected in each village and information of the actual structure of the questionnaire.

2. While I appreciate the comparison of the simple descriptive statistics emerging from the household survey and from the group techniques, I am not sure that the application of a t-test is relevant in this specific context. My understanding of a t-test is that when it is applied in its unpaired variant, two separate sets of independent and identically distributed samples are obtained, one from each of the two populations being compared. I am unsure that the samples of this study are independent and identically distributed samples. I would prefer that a statistician assess the validity of the statistical test used to measure the convergence of the findings.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.