Author's response to reviews

Title: Enhanced reporting of deaths among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples using linked administrative health datasets

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Version: 2 Date: 3 January 2012

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Dear Sir/Madam

We would like to submit the attached paper entitled “Enhanced reporting of deaths among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples using linked administrative health datasets” to BMC Medical Research Methodology. Thank you for considering it for publication.

Indigenous peoples are known to be under-reported on administrative health and health-related data collections in the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. National statistical agencies of these countries include qualifications on the reliability of data that are presented by Indigenous status in their publications. Concerns about the quality of Indigenous health information led to the establishment of the International Group for Indigenous Health Measurement in 2005, with the aim of fostering a better understanding of the issues around measuring Indigenous health.

Our study demonstrates the use of linked records from population administrative health datasets to improve the reporting of deaths among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in NSW, Australia. Unlike previous published work, we propose an algorithm to assess the weight of evidence of a person being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander that takes into account the risk of incorrectly reporting a person as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander due to incorrect links or data entry errors.

The results of the study are of interest to public health professionals in general and in particular to those who wish to improve the measurement of Indigenous health so as to more accurately report on the health disparities experienced by Indigenous peoples.

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.
Thank you for your consideration. If you have any queries regarding the manuscript please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

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