Reviewer's report

Title: Selection bias: neighbourhood controls and controls selected from those presenting to a health unit in a case control study of efficacy of BCG revaccination

Version: 5 Date: 15 January 2007

Reviewer: Joanna Stewart

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
None

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Throughout the document there are still many spelling and punctuation mistakes. I pointed out several of these last review which have not been corrected. There are also many double full stops and commas in this version. The * below table 1 is still not anywhere in the table. Below are some additional typos, but they are not exhaustive
Methods –par 1 – missing space and full stop line 7.
- last sentence different, not difference
last par - ‘with adjusted by’ needs rewording
Results – in discussion of table 3 – owning, not owing
Discussion – 4th line – extra ‘by’
Typo last line

Other comments -

Abstract – background – it is not enough to have controls with the same proportion exposed as the cases - the discussion words it better.
- methods – can not say results from neighbourhood controls were unbiased –less biased perhaps.

Results – sentence under placement of table 1 incorrect, – believe you are referring to odds, not probability and the second HU should be neighbourhood. As the study was matched, however, it is not appropriate to look at this raw difference – it is correctly handled in table 5

4th paragraph – think you are referring to the difference in the proportion vaccinated in the 2 groups, rather than the proportion vaccinated.

Sentence referring to table 4 needs rewording

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Methods – 2nd par - The text still is not crystal clear on how the controls were matched. Perhaps instead of the 2nd sentence it may be clearer to say that as the neighbourhood controls were selected 2 years later they would be expected to be on average 2 years older at time of interview.

Would it be better to refer to the participants as subjects (or participants) rather than patients at the end of the methods?

In table 2 it is not clear how the minimum wage was used. On first impression I assumed this meant that this adjusted for changes over the period of the study, so that at least as far as the general change in economy was concerned this variable was not affected by the time delay but then the footnote equates this to dollars.
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

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