Reviewer's report

Title: Assessment of vaccine candidates for the elderly: a review

Version: 1  Date: 11 December 2012

Reviewer: Beatrix Grubeck-Loebenstein

Reviewer's report:

This review addresses a very important topic, namely vaccine candidates for the elderly. It provides an elaborate and interesting description of the field including aspects such as pathogens, availability of vaccines, adverse effects of vaccines as well as public health issues. A thorough literature research has been made and although the article focuses on the situation in the Netherlands, it is exemplary for many European countries. Its publication will be of interest for a wide readership, from research, clinical medicine as well as public health.

Minor essential revisions have to be made:

(1) Tables as well as figures should be self-explanatory. The legends should therefore be much more detailed. In the legend to Table 1 it is, for instance, unclear which patient group is defined as 100%. Would it be all patients admitted to ICU? Table 2 should be much more detailed. Firstly, it should be mentioned that mean direct/indirect costs presumably refer to one case. Secondly, it would be important to explain how direct and indirect costs are calculated. Table 3 should have a more detailed legend than just a summary. This table is also extremely overloaded and therefore difficult to read. Perhaps it would be best to split it into two parts.

(2) Direct and indirect costs should also be explained in the text under "Use and costs of health care".

(3) On p.10, two references to Fig. 2 are made. This should presumably be to Fig. 3?

(4) The reference given in Fig. 2 should presumably be 38 instead of 37.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.