Reviewer’s report

Title: Age distribution of influenza morbidity and mortality: a comparative analysis between seasonal influenza epidemics and the H1N1 pandemic.

Version: 1 Date: 12 March 2010

Reviewer: Romina Paula Libster

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) Taking into consideration all the technologic advances in patient care that have lead to improved survival outcomes, comparing the 2009 outbreak information with much earlier time periods is not optimal. Would be important to compare with immediate past outbreaks information.

2) Are the demographic and epidemiological characteristics of the US and French patients comparable to those from New Zealand and Mexico? What about the comparability of the surveillance systems in these different countries that is used to measure the impact of influenza?

3) Have you calculated the estimated population growth when using the 2004/2005 data from the WHO as denominators for the rates? If not, would you be overestimating the morbidity and mortality rates?

4) How is morbidity defined in this manuscript?

5) If ILI was not laboratory-confirmed, both the Morbidity and Mortality rates would likely be overestimated? Please comment.

6) The methods used to calculate the morbidity and mortality rates in the various populations should be clearly outlined (number of subjects in the numerator and in the denominator). Could you clarify?

7) In the background statement “A shift of mortality toward younger age groups…” needs greater support with references from the literature. Please comment.

8) The methods are not well detailed. Surveillance methods may vary with both site and time. Could you revise?

9) In the methods, were the ICD used to identify influenza laboratory confirmed? Please, clarify.

10) The authors may consider adding these additional references and commenting on them in the Discussion.


31;4(8):e6832.


Minor Essential Revisions

1) It would be important to use a consistent term throughout the manuscript for the Pandemic influenza (H1N1) virus.

2) The conclusion “Possibly because younger people have never previously encountered this viral subtype” should be moved to the discussion since it is speculative and should be replaced with a statement that summarizes the conclusion of your work.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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