Reviewer’s report

Title: The burden of varicella from a parent’s perspective and its societal impact in The Netherlands: an Internet survey

Version: 1 Date: 6 June 2011

Reviewer: Luan-Yin Y Chang

Reviewer’s report:

Overall comment:
This is a report of the burden of varicella from a parent’s perspective and its societal impact in The Netherlands by an Internet survey. The percentage who did not seek medical help for varicella was considerable (62%). Parents visited a medical doctor (MD) for complications (skin infections, balance and movement disorders, fits/convulsions, unconsciousness) in 11% of the varicella episodes. This study provides insight in the spectrum of varicella-episodes and associated healthcare use.

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. How far is it between the questionnaire survey and varicella? If it’s too long, how to minimize recall bias?
2. What is the response rate for this internet questionnaire survey? What characteristics are different between the responders and non-responders?
3. How can the authors verify the reported symptoms, specially serious symptoms or complications such as balance or movement disorders, fits/convulsions, unconsciousness?

Minor Essential Revisions
The percentage of consulting a medical doctor was lower for children with complications than without (mild) complications (39.2% vs 67.2%). It seems unusual. Children with complications should need more medical care but why their rate of consulting a medical doctor was significantly lower?

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

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.