Reviewer’s report

Title: Epidemiological Characteristics of Varicella from 2000 to 2008 and the Impact of Nationwide Immunization in Taiwan

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Reviewer: Elisabetta Franco

Reviewer’s report:

The paper illustrate an interesting point as the universal mass vaccination against varicella is now practiced or proposed in many countries.

Major Compulsory Revisions
Authors cite the recent paper of Lian e al (citation Nr 11), that present the same argument and similar data even if with a different approach; they should discuss the results of this paper in order to demonstrate the value added by their study.

Minor Essential Revisions
Background, pag 5, line 5. Author should state they will use both terms: varicella and chickenpox in the paper; this is particularly important when they describe ICD-9-CM codes (Definition, pag 8).
I think that some data about the dimension of the population could be useful.

Methods
pag 7 Vaccination was already described in background and is not properly a method of this study
pag 8 Definitions ICD-9-CM: see above
pag 9: line 11. Is there a meaning for defining seasons in this strange way?

Results
Age distribution, pag 11. Fig 2A can be omitted and the data described. Are there cases in people older than 19? In Taiwan are persons up to 20 years of age regarded as children?
Age-specific annual incidence pag 12. It would be interesting to have all years (also 2001-2003) or why not to use 2003, a highly endemic years, for comparison?
Hospitalization, pag 12 the same comment for Figure 4 (and not 3 as written in the paper)

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I was invited to give presentations or to attend meetings by Vaccine Producers (GSK, SanofiPasteurMSD, Pfizer and Novartis).
I received research funding from GSK, SanofiPasteurMSD and Pfizer.