Reviewer's report

Title: Timeliness of contact tracing among flight passengers for influenza A/H1N1 2009

Version: 2 Date: 3 August 2011

Reviewer: Ruta Sharaqngpani

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Major:

1. Methods section paragraph 4: This sentence is confusing.
From these data, time intervals (in days) between flight arrival and date of diagnosis (interval I), between diagnosis and between request and contact details identified (interval III) were calculated, see figure 2.

This should read like this:
From these data, time intervals (in days) between flight arrival and date of diagnosis (interval I), between diagnosis and request dates (interval II) and between request and contact details identified dates (interval III) were calculated, see figure 2.

I think this is what you meant. If not, please clarify and make sure the figure matches what is said in the article.

2. Discussion section paragraph 9: You should include the limitation that this study was conducted at only one airport and may not be generalizable to other places particularly outside the EU.

3. It makes sense that only flights from Mexico and the U.S. were identified given the time period May 29th 2009 through June 22nd that most of the cases would come from these places. However, were cases from other places identified?

4. I saw that you included flight origin info in the table. Were there any differences between fight origins rather than airlines or PLCs?

Minor:

1. Introduction paragraph 4 line 2: MHS needs to be spelled out here rather than in the methods section since it is used here first.

2. Methods section paragraph 3 last sentence: I think you need only mention that laboratory confirmation was done through PCR. That fact that there were limited labs doing the test and that time need to perform the test belongs in the discussion and is already included there.

3. Methods section paragraph 2: What does GGD stand for?
4. Results Section paragraph 1 last sentence: Please include the time intervals for the comparison (Dutch and no-Dutch) airlines.

5. Discussion section paragraph 1: Regarding the awareness of ILI symptoms, Schiphol Airport handed all passengers on flights arriving from Mexico information leaflets on influenza A/H1N1 2009 with information on early symptoms and requesting them to seek medical advice in case of fever and respiratory symptoms as coughing.

This should read:
Regarding the awareness of ILI symptoms, Schiphol Airport handed all passengers on flights arriving from Mexico information leaflets on influenza A/H1N1 2009 with information on early symptoms and requesting them to seek medical advice in case of fever and respiratory symptoms as coughing.

6. Discussion section paragraph 5 sentence 4: there are 2 periods.

Discretionary:

1. Introduction paragraph 4 last sentence: This statement seems to be more of a conclusion that may belong in the discussion rather than the introduction.

2. Discussion section paragraph 7 The following sentence:
Collecting passenger details from foreign airlines caused also considerable delay because of differences in time zones and the need to convince the concerned airline companies about the urgency to collect and hand-over passenger lists with contact details.

May read better this way:
Collecting passenger details from foreign airlines also caused considerable delay because of differences in time zones and the need to convince the concerned airline companies about the urgency to collect and hand-over passenger lists with contact information.

3. Discussion section paragraph 10: The following sentence:
Furthermore, airline companies and/or airport Schiphol provided contacts already with information on the disease and its
symptoms by.

May read better this way:
Furthermore, airline companies and/or Schiphol airport already provided contacts with information on the disease and its symptoms.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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