Reviewer’s report

Title: Did the pandemic have an impact on influenza vaccination attitude? A survey among health care workers

Version: 1 Date: 17 September 2010

Reviewer: Udo Buchholz

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An interesting study which contains a few interesting details, which are to my taste too much hidden in the text. Much of the information provided is not really new or surprising. Interesting elements include the younger age of those willing to be vaccinated, the large proportion of those undecided, and the description of the conflicting media and political messages during the vaccination campaign. Authors refer to a few countries, their vaccination rates and approaches to promote (or not) vaccination among HCW. I would encourage the authors to try to strengthen this part, and try to look more systematically for data from other countries, including perhaps a brief interview with a key public health person from the respective country who could explain why vaccination rates have turned the way it did. This would be very interesting information for the readers.

Major compulsory revisions:
  - Authors should state more clearly how the "sample" was chosen, how HCW were approached, if possible do a non-responder analysis (is there a systematic difference between non-responders adn responders? e.g. regarding age or type of profession). Also some of the information seems conflicting/confusing: e.g. in Methods, page 5 it says: 91% "coverage rate", but in Results it says: only three HCW refused to participate, and on page 6 it says that a sample size of 745 was achieved. Were both HCW AND medical students targeted? Which variable was used for the sample size calculation? (vaccination rate?)

Minor essential revisions:
  - Abstract: please state, when the pandemic wave hit the country, when the vaccine was available and when the survey was conducted.
  - Abstract: please state briefly the type of questions asked
  - Abstract: please give not only %, but numbers (n of N) (please do so throughout the manuscript: "n (%) of N..."
  - Abstract: 30% vacc rate cannot be followed from the numbers given. approx 12% among those willing to be vaccinated, approx 4% among those unwilling, so the rest must be among those undecided. please state the numbers.
  - Abstract: are there numbers about the proportion of HCW who - during seasonal influenza - are hesitant regarding vaccination, or the average age? If available, these numbers should be contrasted with the numbers during pandemic influenza (which would make it more interesting)
- Abstract: the middle sentence is not supported from the evidence. (for example: authors should say something in the background about the media coverage)
- Background: consider saying some words about how the pandemic and the vaccine was presented in the public, how it was presented by medical specialty associations, the media, politicians, etc.
- Methods: how were vacc rates retrieved?
- page 6: analysis of profession on vacc status is not clearly described; the same is the case for the description of the development of the multivariate model (forward, backward, ...?, what the criteria of inclusion of variables?)
- p.8: confounding effect of gender on profession is not sufficiently explained
- p.10: 8th line from the bottom: I suppose you mean "pandemic vaccination estimates" and not "seasonal vaccination estimates"?
- p.11, second paragraph: comparing attitudes with the situation in a different population at a different time is not adequate, because differences may be due to either.

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

**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 declare that I have no competing interests