Reviewer's report

Title: Influenza: A scientometric and density-equalizing analysis

Version: 1 Date: 27 December 2012

Reviewer: Matthew Biggerstaff

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting manuscript that focuses on a review of influenza in the scientific literature from 1900 to 2009. It explores the countries, institutions, and authors that produce the most influenza literature and analyzes the impact that the literature has had. This article would be of most interest to influenza researchers.

Major Compulsory Revisions
None

Minor Essential Revisions
• In the data sources section of the methods, I would describe what data were extracted from OECD.
• In the timeframe section of the methods, please clarify the statement about restricting the timeframe to years where there were at least 30 articles published. Does that mean entire years weren’t included in the analysis? If so, I don’t understand how including those years would introduce outliers.
• In the abstract, you state that JAMA had the highest 2009 impact factor of the 10 journals with the most influenza-related articles. However, in the “journal analysis” section of the results, you state that Lancet has the highest impact factor.
• The “author analysis” section of the results needs some consolidation. It gives a lot of details and a lot of different stratifications of the data. I would pick the main points of this paragraph (maybe the most productive authors and the highest citation rate results) and delete the rest.
• The final paragraph of the discussion section (“the examination of the citation rate cannot lead...”) needs to be focused and clarified. There is a lot of discussion of self-citation, which does not seem to be the focus of the paper, and no data describing the appropriateness of self-citations are presented.
• All the table and figure titles and legends need to be more descriptive and complete.

Discretionary Revisions
• In the first paragraph of the “amount of published items...”, section, please clarify the specific years referenced in the statement “half of the publications in both databases were published in the last ten years of the examined period
(XXXX–XXXX).” It’s a bit confusing there because you mention so many different years in that section.

• In the first paragraph of the “analysis of research origin and cooperation” section, it might be helpful to combine the second part of the second sentence (followed by scientists from the United Kingdom) with the third sentence (overall, those researchers are contributing). That will make it clearer that the 5% is for each of the countries listed and is not combined together.

• The official name of the U.S. CDC is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

• I have included some minor language edits as a pdf.

**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 declare that I have no competing interests.