Title: Herpes Zoster surveillance using electronic databases in the Valencian Community, Spain.

Version: 2 Date: 16 August 2013

Reviewer: Kaitlin Rainwater Lovett

Reviewer's report:

The authors have responded appropriately to all criticisms raised in the initial review. The English grammar and structure is much improved and they inserted additional support into the Background and Discussion sections that highlight the importance of their findings. A few additional notes:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. It is generally erroneous to use overlapping confidence intervals to determine if two populations are statistically significant different. When CIs do not overlap, they are statistically significantly different; however, when they do overlap they may or may not be significantly different. Either consult a statistician about how to properly compare incidence rate estimates or remove this explanation of your comparison method in the Methods section and the last paragraph of the Results.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. 2nd to last sentence of the 5th paragraph of the Background: “…and is expected to be widely used in Spain over the next years.” Should there be a number between the words next and years? Or perhaps you don’t have an exact figure but could use the phrase, “next few years”.

2. In the 1st sentence of the 1st paragraph of “HZ Incidence” in the Epidemiological analysis subsection of the Results, the abbreviation for the phrase person-year was defined in the Background so you do not need to re-define it here.

3. Last sentence of the 1st paragraph of the Discussion: “per 1000” has been omitted after the incidence rates of males and females. Perhaps you can phrase as “3.86 and 5.32 per 1000 PY in males and females, respectively.”

4. 3rd sentence of the 7th paragraph of the Discussion: I believe you intended to have a period instead of a semicolon after reference #47.

5. Last sentence of the Conclusions: The databases are a good tool for estimating incidence, not for the disease itself. Therefore, I suggest inserting “estimating the incidence of” between “tool for” and “HZ disease”.

6. Figure 2 title: IC 95% should be 95% CI.
Discretionary Revisions

1. I suggest moving the sentence comparing incidence rates in women and men in “HZ incidence” in the Epidemiological analysis subsection of the Results up to the end of the first paragraph (“HZ was more common among women…”). It appears out of place after the paragraph comparing incidence rates by age.

2. 3rd sentence of the 3rd paragraph of the Discussion: “after a plain text is written” is an awkward phrase. “after a written explanation” would be more readable.

3. Last sentence of the 7th paragraph of the Discussion: “…different health systems may also vary incidence rates…” is written poorly. I believe the authors intend to say, “…some of these studies included emergency room visits and some countries use ICD-9-CM codification for billing purposes, which would result in variable interest rates.”

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests