Reviewer's report

Title: High proportion of rural residents and multi-exposure history in human cases of avian influenza A (H7N9) virus in Zhejiang Province, China

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Reviewer: Hongjie Yu

Reviewer's report:

High proportion of rural residents and multi-exposure history in human cases of avian influenza A (H7N9) virus in Zhejiang Province, China

Author: Zhenyu Gong et al.

Comments to Editor:

Human infections with influenza A (H7N9) are emerging in China since March 31, 2013. The number of patients reported in Zhejiang Province is the largest in China.

In this manuscript, the authors report the epidemiological and clinical characteristics of H7N9 infections. They find that the proportion of rural patients in Zhejiang Province is higher than that in other provinces and some patients had multi-exposure history. The findings are valuable for the control and prevention of H7N9. Although there are limitations of manuscripts and several areas for improvement in the analysis and discussion, the manuscript (after improvement and revision) is likely to offer substantial insight into the control and prevention of H7N9 infections.

I suggest that this manuscript be accepted for publication under the conditions the authors' revision reflects my recommendations, which will significantly improve the quality of the manuscript.

Comments to Authors:

This manuscript reports the epidemiological and clinical characteristics of H7N9 infections. The data is impressive and the analyses is useful. However, there are multiple improvements that can be made in the manuscript and the evaluation of the data. They are listed as follows:

Major issues

1. The manuscript would greatly benefit by editing by a native English writer with scientific writing experience
2. In the abstract and introduction, I suggest that the authors update the number of H7N9 patients till the end of 2013.
3. In the methods, the last phrase of the case definition is unclear – “or recent exposure to poultry was defined as a suspected case.” Please rephrase. The
language in this paragraph overall should be improved

4. Figure 5 and Figure 6 should be deleted.

**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:**

declare that I have no competing interests'