Reviewer’s report

Title: Patterns of Schistosoma haematobium infection, impact of praziquantel treatment and re-infection after treatment in a cohort of schoolchildren from rural KwaZulu-Natal/South Africa

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Reviewer: simon brooker

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This is an interesting paper that describes a well-conducted field evaluation of the impact of a pilot programme for helminth control in South Africa. What struck me in reading the manuscript is that the authors claim to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme (i.e. health impact in the context of its programme-based provision). (See Habicht, J.P. et al. (1999) Evaluation designs for adequacy, plausibility and probability of public health programmes. Int. J. Epidemiol. 28, 10-18).

However, the analysis ignores untreated individuals, and so is not a true evaluation of programme effectiveness. Rather the paper reports treatment efficacy of praziquantel and reinfection after treatment, which is already well-described in the literature, and as such, does not warrant publication.

Furthermore, many of the epidemiological patterns by age and sex are expected and therefore of limited interest to the international audience.

If the paper can be substantially re-worked to assess programme effectiveness, it would be a useful contribution to the literature.

Otherwise, it remains of limited interest.