Reviewer's report

Title: Disease burden and related medical costs of rotavirus infections in Taiwan

Version: 3 Date: 1 September 2006

Reviewer: Ken Stein

Reviewer's report:

General

The question addressed by this paper is not new, but nevertheless the paper contributes to understanding of the global burden of rotavirus disease.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The methods for estimating costs should be reported in detail.

The authors should consider uncertainty in their estimates e.g. based on (a) the precision of their estimates of the proportion of cases of AGE due to rotavirus and (b) variation in the estimates for hospital costs used in the calculation of benefits.

The limitations of the study should be discussed in more detail.

The method depends on retrospective routine data sources – to what extent is this system comprehensive?

The sampling strategy for the reimbursement data was not random – what possible limitations does this present? The sampling strategy for outpatient data only considered 0.5% of admissions – why? This reviewer assumes that the entire dataset was available to the researchers.

The generalisability of the findings from the three hospitals to all of Taiwan is limited by the finding that there are important geographical differences in the pattern of AGE

The study has focussed on economic burden, rather than the overall burden of disease, which would include mortality and morbidity. Furthermore, it is not clear (perhaps due to this reviewer’s lack of understanding of the Taiwanese health system) whether any other relevant costs have been excluded e.g. from primary care health services.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests