Reviewer's report

Title: Treating cutaneous leishmaniasis patients in Kabul, Afghanistan: cost-effectiveness of an operational program in a complex emergency setting.

Version: 2 Date: 16 November 2006

Reviewer: Theo Vos

Reviewer's report:

General

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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

A major weakness that remains concerns the estimate of duration of untreated cutaneous leishmaniasis. While I stated that the reported range of durations from the cross-sectional survey would underestimate the distribution of true duration it does not mean that the authors have modelled an underestimate. It is very likely to be quite an overestimate. The survey reports a range of 0.01-8 years duration with mean of 0.75 years. The triangular distribution used between these values has a mean value of 2.9 years, i.e. almost 4 times longer! Unless there has been a dramatic increase in incidence over the year prior to survey, it seems there is quite a high 'natural remission' rate. The published range and mean of the distribution resembles a lognormal distribution (which can be described e.g. with parameters μ of 3.2 and σ of 0.97 if measured in weeks). If we assume incidence has remained stable over last year(s) the mean true duration would be higher than 0.75 years but not likely to exceed 1.5 years. Using the values in the tornado diagram that would mean the true CE ratio would be between $750 and $1500 and would alter conclusions drastically.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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

Fig 1 still refers to SSG rather than pentavalent antimonials

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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 of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'