Reviewer's report

**Title:** Population Based Trends in Mortality, Morbidity and Treatment for Very Preterm- and Very Low Birth Weight Infants Over 12 Years

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 7 December 2011

**Reviewer:** Vivek Narendran

**Reviewer's report:**

Major revisions:
1. This is a nice overview of trends in neonatal mortality and morbidity in a geographically defined (national data) population. The strength lies in its quality and extent of data available over a 12 year period. However, the text is very long and needs to be shortened significantly. Most sentences in the body of the paper can be combined and truncated.

Minor revisions:
1. The definition of VP and VLBW needs to incorporated into table 1 (in the row heading)
2. Use period instead of commas while quoting proportions (eg: 66.9% instead of 66,9%) through out the paper
3. Define born 'alive' as live birth is defined differently in different countries
4. Include either in the background or discussion in a single paragraph the salient differences in clinical management between 1996 and 2008 ie: increase use of probiotics, CPAP etc instead of mentioning it under specific morbidities discussion.
5. The tables and figures contain too much 'statistics' and 'comparisons' that can be confusing. Eg: Fig 2 - graphically does not add much to the paper - can delete and include in table.Similarly Fig 3 can be deleted. Table 1: delete the last column ie regression coefficients. Describe in row heading VP and VLBW (not in the legend)

Table 3: delete row 'regression coefficient', only show p-values between 96-08 (intent of the paper) and delete the other rows of p-value comparisions of different years. Similarly, in Table 4 stick to comparisons between 96-08 and delete rest of rows with p-value.

6. Shorten the discussion significantly and do not repeat the 'results'. Concentrate on potential reasons for change between 96-08.

**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:
I have no competing interests