Reviewer's report

Title: Use of health services by remote dwelling Aboriginal infants in tropical northern Australia: a retrospective cohort study

Version: 2 Date: 9 October 2011

Reviewer: Alan AR Ruben

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All discretionary Revisions:

Changing the term “first world” might be changed to “developed” or “wealthy developed” might be considered”.

Results:

Problems with gestational age estimation are well described for this population; a comment on this may be justified.

The y axis on figure 1 might be rescaled for a better fit

The mean number of presentations to the clinics is 28, median 25, range 1-186. Readers may be interested in more information on the numbers and diagnoses of the children who accounted for a disproportionate number of presentations by including a table similar to Figure 2 but for clinic presentations, and how these related to the routine follow-up; this would be useful for service planning.

Conclusions: Some interstate and international readers may not understand how < 8 infant presentations/day, between two clinics, including over 50% being for routine checks and follow-up, would support the conclusion "HCs are not staffed to provide this level of care for the under one-year population". Some supporting detail might be provided

The discussion and conclusions only mention in passing potential solutions including within the medical model; this manuscript may provide the opportunity to discuss and where appropriate advocate for, even if briefly, some of the community development approaches towards improving indigenous child health that have been shown to be effective, including for example in the health area, community controlled health services, family centred primary health care approach etc.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests