Reviewer's report

**Title:** Hand hygiene instruction decreases illness-related absenteeism in elementary schools: a prospective cohort study

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 7 December 2011

**Reviewer:** Charles Vukotich, Jr.

**Reviewer's report:**

I am pleased that the authors obviously took a great deal of time and consideration in addressing the reviewers comments, and did everything that they could to incorporate the reviewers comments.

There is a significant amount of literature about the use of non-pharmaceutical interventions, including hand washing/sanitizing, and it's impact on absenteeism. There are even a few comprehensive studies. This paper breaks no really new ground, but from a public health policy and practice perspective, it makes clear that one cannot just put a NPI intervention in place and expect it to work. it reinforces the need to include instruction and periodic refresher instruction.

I would suggest that you look at information at www.pipp.pitt.edu

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.