Reviewer's report

**Title:** Chronic respiratory disease amongst children presenting to a tertiary paediatric emergency department with acute respiratory illness: study protocol

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 23 March 2013

**Reviewer:** Claudia Elisabeth E Kuehni

**Reviewer's report:**

The submitted manuscript describes the protocol of a planned study on the epidemiology of chronic cough in children. Chronic cough in children is an important and understudied topic and related publications are particularly welcome.

However, I felt that the underlying manuscript does not describe the study with enough details to allow its replication (which would be the ultimate goal when publishing a detailed study protocol).

For instance, I would welcome:
- publication of the questionnaire (at least as online addendum)
- a list of the risk factors to be studied, and the underlying reasons
- more details on the planned examinations (microbiology, virology)
- a clearer description of the aims (particularly the last one, relating to steroid treatment, which seems somehow unclear and not related to the introduction and the methods)
- the paragraph on sample size calculation needs to be revised by a statistician and should take into account participation rates and drop-out rates
- the paragraph on statistical analysis should also be revised by a biostatistician
- in general, it would help if the aims were numbered, and the intro, methods and discussion would relate very clearly to the respective aims.

**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:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no competing interests.