Reviewer's report

Title: Children with pertussis inform the investigation of other pertussis cases among contacts

Version: 2 Date: 11 February 2007

Reviewer: Alberto E Tozzi

Reviewer's report:

General
The reviewed version of this manuscript was greatly improved. I would suggest, however, to make additional changes to help the reader to correctly interpret the results. The major problem is obviously the low sensitivity of culture for confirming microbiologically contacts of the index case. Maybe the authors may add in the discussion a word of caution not only for the low sensitivity of diagnostic test but also for the potential of misclassification for individuals with cough.

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

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

- some minor English revisions would still help

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

- the authors may add in the background some information on immunization schedule and coverage in the area where the work was done. Also some epidemiological information, such as age distribution of endemic cases, and frequency of outbreaks would be useful.

- comparison of cases by immunization status was made by the chi square test. Authors may consider to calculate a relative risk which would underline the risk of being a case when not vaccinated.

- there is no information on case management after investigating secondary cases. Did the author feel that case tracing was helpful in controlling the spread of the disease? Adding a comment on this may reinforce the take home message that every index case should be investigated for secondary cases.

- finally, the authors should be cautious in the conclusions since microbiological confirmation of cases is lacking in most contacts

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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 declare that I have no competing interests