Reviewer's report

**Title:** Perception of Epidemic Risk in the French General Population: A Cross-sectional study in the Rhone-Alpes Region

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 5 October 2009

**Reviewer:** Onno de Zwart

**Reviewer's report:**

The manuscript has potential as it reports on risk perception related to outbreak of avian influenza among birds in France.

**Major compulsory revisions**

The main problem of the article is that the questionnaire used and the measures used are not described. This makes it not possible to really review the article. There are many possible ways to measure threats, knowledge or behaviour change. Brewer et al (2007) have outlined in their meta-analysis how to measure risk perception. As in this manuscript the concepts used are not clear it is impossible to interpret the results. For example was threat asked for someone themselves to get the diseases, was there a timeframe included or not etc, how was knowledge measured, how behaviour change. This should be clarified before a real review can take place.

The manuscript is potentially interesting because risk perception was measured in relation to an outbreak. However, the outbreak is not described in the manuscript, nor is information given on how it was reported in the media and thus how it might have influenced risk perception.

Currently there are some questions related to the discussion, e.g. why is unexpectedly that epidemics were not perceived as major threat. This has been seen in more studies. However the discussion can better be discussed when the necessary changes have been made.

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests'