Reviewer's report

Title: Impact of the Family Health Program on the quality of vital information and reduction of unattended deaths in Brazil: an ecological longitudinal study

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Reviewer: sandhi M barreto

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Title: Impact of the family health program on the quality of vital information and reduction of unattended deaths in Brazil: an ecological longitudinal study.

General comments
The article addresses a very interesting and relevant question to the Brazilian public health system. The paper is clear and well presented. The analysis is sound and the results show a significant association between coverage by the family health program and reduction in unattended death. Some specific questions and suggestions related mainly to the methods and results sections are presented below.

Specific comments

Minor Essential Revisions
1. In the methods section, the authors claim to have used the variable functional illiteracy. However, in the results they use the term “illiteracy” rate. Which rate was used? The term needs to be defined and standardize throughout the text.

Major Compulsory Revisions
2. The number of losses due to missing information is quite large. It is important to know the characteristics of the municipalities not included in the analysis, at least in relation to population size and how they compare with those included in the analysis.

3. In Table 2 the authors present the description of the population based on median values. However, such description does not allow the reader to know the distribution of the municipalities according to the variables and categories proposed in the methods section. I suggest to replace the median by the proportion of municipalities in each category such as: % of municipalities with mean income per capita< R$120.00 and % of municipalities with < 50,000 inhabitants.

4. As the authors have included very small municipalities in the analysis, and as mortality rates can get very unstable in such municipalities, it would be interesting to know the proportion of very small municipalities (lets say < 20,000 inhabitants) and how this could have impacted the results. Perhaps, an idea would be to carry out the same analysis in the subset of municipalities with more stable rates and
see whether they get the same results. This question should also be discussed in the limitation section.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'