Reviewer's report

Title: Measuring the impact of health policies using Internet search patterns

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Reviewer: Robin Gauld

Reviewer's report:

This is a very well put together study. The article is well constructed, easy to read and reports on some fascinating findings as outlined in the abstract. I particularly like the fact that the article is straight to the point and digestible for a general audience, the method is novel, and findings with implications for further research outlined. I think the article should be accepted pretty much as is, although I would suggest the authors tighten up the writing in places. As stated, this is generally fine but there are occasional lapses as on the 'background' page, 2nd para "implications on planning" should be 'implications for...". Last sentence, para before "results' should be "save a woman's life". More reference to the figures would be useful. I can't seem to find where Figs 3-4 are referred to in the text. Other Figs don't seem to line up with the text either. Check that labels on Figs and refs to these are aligned. It could be useful to think about putting in a table that shows numbers of overall searches and those for abortion in each of the countries and US states, and also include the overall abortion rates, but I'll leave that open. Another thought is the title: should this have "the case of abortion" added to it? The only other point, and this may be one the editors need to make a decision on, is whether this article is more of a short research report than a 'research article'. It reports on an initial research exercise and lays out a more indepth research program in the discussion. Finally, I'm not a statistician so can't really comment on this. I suggest expert comment be sought.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests