Reviewer’s report

Title: Assessing Local Determinants of Neural Tube Defects in the Heshun Region, China

Version: 1 Date: 9 October 2009

Reviewer: Zhiwen Li

Reviewer’s report:

Shanxi province of China has the highest incidence of NTD worldwide. Little was reported previously about the determinants of the NTD in this area. This report on the determinants of NTD in this unique region using GIS method is an interesting paper. There are several points where I am concerned about the content. In addition there are several significant typographical errors that I note below.

• Major Compulsory Revisions
  1. In abstract: the results should provide main findings about the identified proxy variables or determinants, and their effects on NTD.
  2. Some contents in the “Discussion” part should be moved to the results. For example, the description of relationship between NTD rate and each proxy variables(for each figure).
  3. The limitations and strengths of this study should be clearly stated in Discussion.
  4. The main identified determinants should be summarized in Conclusion part.

• Minor Essential Revisions
  1. at the beginning of the Method of Abstract, “Prevalence NTD rate” should be ”NTD prevalece rate”.
  2#In figure2C, “NTBD” should be “NTD”.

• Discretionary Revisions
  1. First sentence of Background could be left out without substantial loss to the reader.
  2. Title: I suggest “Shanxi Province” be added in the title.

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, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the
statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests