Reviewer's report

Title: Legionella spp. in Southeastern Italy: surveillance and epidemiology

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Reviewer: M Velonakis

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Research article
Title: Legionella spp. in Southeastern Italy: surveillance and epidemiology
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Reviewer: Emmanuel N. Velonakis

Comments
The manuscript includes useful information which may be published considering that the authors will provide a major revision to the manuscript. Unfortunately, the manuscript suffers from severe methodological shortcomings.

Major comments

Methods

In the method section, the authors do not mention the watersides from which the samples were collected. They do not differentiate if the samples were collected from water supply systems (how many from hot and how many from cold water supply system) or from cooling towels or other watersides (fountains etc). Moreover, they do not mention anywhere and they do not differentiate the third sampling of each building/item and repetitive sampling possibly after remedial actions. It is very important to analyse separately the first sampling of the buildings/items from the second and third sampling. They write generally risk assessment, do they mean hygiene inspection or something different?

Results

The authors should provide the results according to the above suggested changes in the methodology. Moreover, it is important to analyse their data according to time (yearly) to see if there is an increasing or decreasing trend until the period 2000-2009.

Minor comments
- p. 2, line 33; p. 9, line 204: “incidence” in place of “frequency”
- p. 2, line 38; p.8, line 180; p. 10, line 228: “concentration” or other in place of “emission”
- p. 2, line 40; p. 10, line 231: consider another term, e.g. Health care facilities, if it is not only hospitals
- p. 3, line 46-51: these lines would be better to be deleted
- p. 3, line 59: please delete “and” before already
- p. 3, line 63: it would be useful to be added the following sentence: “……. and currently by ELDSNet, which is coordinated by ECDC, carries out surveillance of the pneumonic form of legionellosis, involving all EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. It aims to identify relevant public health risks, enhance prevention of cases and monitor epidemiological trends (http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/activities/surveillance/ELDSNet/Pages/Index.aspx).”
- p. 3, line 67: “distinguish” in place of “verify”
- p. 4, line 96: “mL” in place of “lm”
- p. 6, line 130: during discussion – consider taking into consideration other papers on risk assessment, e.g. Evaluation of standardized scored inspections for Legionnaires’ disease prevention during the Athens Olympics-Epidemiology and Infection (2006), 134(5): 1074-1081 Cambridge University Press doi:10.1017/S0950268806006042, Risk factors for contamination of hotel water distribution systems by Legionella species, Applied and Environmental Microbiology (2007), 73(5): 1489-1492 etc. Do you consider for a better risk analysis procedure, if there is a failure to correlate Legionella positive microbiological test results and risk analysis procedures?
- p. 6, line 148: “and” in place of “e”
- p. 8, line 182: “of” instead of “on”
- p. 8, line 185: “suggest” instead of “suggests”
- p. 8, line 187: please add … that subsequently underwent … and delete “to” before disinfection
- p. 8, line 188: “thereafter” in place of “periodically”
- p. 8, line 198: please add … that the pool of serogroups…
- p. 9, line 199: “be used for” instead of “be able to obtain”
- p. 9, line 201: “incidence” in place of “level”
- p. 9, line 202: “has” instead of “is”
- p. 9, line 217: “reach” in place of “arrive at”
- p. 10, line 235: Any suggestions for the need to conduct a more successful risk analysis?

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.