Reviewer's report

Title: Ecological analysis of health care utilisation for China's rural population: association with a rural county's socioeconomic characteristics

Version: 1 Date: 9 June 2010

Reviewer: Emma Heeley

Reviewer's report:

This paper is potentially interesting using national statistics but is written as a masters thesis as opposed to a journal article, it needs re-writing. I have reviewed up to the end of the methods section which needs further clarification before reviewing the paper any further.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

Abstract
Conclusions are unclear

Methods
Please explain how the 67 rural counties and 28 cities were selected.
How was the data for the dependent variables collected? Was it self reported or have national figures been used? If so how many hospitals were used for each county was it a representative sample or complete information? Was it possible to have this information for all 67 counties or was province level data used? Further explanation of the way the data was collected is required as it is fundamental to these analyses.
Why was linear regression selected?
What diagnostics were used to test the model fit?
How was variance determined?

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'