Reviewer’s report

Title: Public Perceptions and Attitudes towards Thalassaemia: Influencing factors in a Multi-racial Population

Version: 1 Date: 29 July 2010

Reviewer: Jenny Hewison

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. Analysis plan and description of results. The multiple regression analysis should be omitted, together with all reference to its results. Only a minute amount of explanatory power is achieved, and the reported statistical significance simply reflects the large sample size. Drawing policy conclusions on the basis of these analyses is misguided and likely to mislead. The same applies to the correlational analyses.

2. The authors overstate and misinterpret the literature on attitudes to termination in Muslims. The problem is similar to the one above: group differences have to be interpreted in the context of very substantial within group variation, so any policy targeted at groups, or any conclusion based on beliefs about group differences, is not reflecting the more complex reality.

3. The termination of pregnancy question in Table 3 is very poorly worded (multiple components, does not distinguish personal views from views of what others should do) and that will certainly have influenced the results. If this was the actual question used, the results must be interpreted with considerable caution.

4. More information on source and content of knowledge questions, plus justification for believing they tap all the important knowledge domains.

5. A much shorter version of the paper, presenting only simple descriptive statistics, and acknowledging throughout the similarities as well as the differences between groups, as well as data limitations, might be acceptable. Conclusions would need to be tempered accordingly.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Some of the knowledge questions are difficult to follow in translated English, eg p9 line 6 – what does “either one parent” mean?

2. Is “Chinese” a spoken language? Cantonese perhaps, or Mandarin?

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.