Reviewer’s report

Title: Perceived risk, anxiety, and behavioural responses of the general public during the early phase of the Influenza A (H1N1) pandemic in the Netherlands: results of 3 consecutive online surveys.

Version: 1 Date: 27 July 2010

Reviewer: Kathi Avery Kinew

Reviewer’s report:

Very useful article for planning ahead by reviewing the 2009 AH1N1 experience. As authors say, "risk communication is of utmost importance" and that "Health authorities should not only communicate the certainties ..but also the uncertainties" in order to build trust(P. 11).

*Excellent research approach in accessing people's views while the epidemic was unfolding. Good discussion of strengths and weaknesses of this method. However, in consideration of its limitations, the authors stated that the Internet panel members who responded were not fully representative of whole Dutch population and were more likely older, Dutch ethnicity, and unemployed, and then discussed factors more likely, Yet they concluded "this population difference likely did not lead to bias in the trends over time or in predictors of behavioural responses". Needs more discussion to explain(pp.9-10)

It may be questionable whether these results would apply across countries/states of repressive regimes which do not have the trust of the population, or across cultures, especially indigenous peoples.

One typo: p. 9 first prg after Discussion subtitle, line 9 - insert word "with" in sentence "Having a strong intention to comply (insert "with") government-advised preventive measures".

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.