Reviewer's report

Title: Congenital Rubella Syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorder Prevented by Measles-Mumps-Rubella Vaccination - United States, 2001-2010

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Reviewer: Sherry Towers

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Comments

I’d like to begin my comments by saying that I found the topic of the paper extremely interesting, particularly in light of the recent news articles about Wakefield’s original studies. In general, I found the paper to be well written, the analysis and calculations in the paper are easy to follow, and the authors’ conclusions appear to be sound and appear to be based on established data sources.

The authors clearly indicate the limiting factors that may affect the results of their calculations.

1. Minor essential revision: I strongly object to the reference to the MMR vaccine in the title; the MM portion of the vaccine has absolutely nothing to do with the conclusions of the paper, and the reference to MMR can be perceived as unnecessary sensationalism on the part of the authors, tapping in to the publicity given to the supposed MMR/autism link. Indeed, throughout the entire paper, I think that reference to MMR needs to be excluded, except for a short sentence in the introduction to state that rubella vaccination in the US is part of the combined MMR shot. Throughout the rest of the paper, reference to “rubella vaccination” should replace reference to MMR vaccination, unless MMR specifically and necessarily needs to be mentioned in the discussion.

2. Discretionary revision: In the 1990’s Japan suspended its MMR vaccination program due to concern about the safety of the vaccine, and Rubella vaccination rates subsequently plummeted. It would be interesting to see in the text a discussion of what effect this had on the Japanese incidence of CRS, and whether the effect is commensurate with the estimates of this paper.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.