Reviewer’s report

Title: Vaccination coverage and timeliness in three South African areas: a prospective study

Version: 2 Date: 27 April 2011

Reviewer: Christopher John Clements

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Vaccination coverage and timeliness in three South African areas: a prospective study

Discretionary revisions

This study is nested within the PROMISE-EBF study looking at exclusively breast fed infants. It examines a subset of the data about vaccine coverage. Because of the detailed data collection, the investigators were able to determine whether doses of vaccine were administered in a timely manner (in relation to the national schedule) or not. This is clearly a highly competent multinational group of researchers who have designed a first class study and used sophisticated data analysis techniques on the collected data. I note, for what it is worth, that it appears the study’s primary aim and designed were orientated round breast-feeding, not vaccine coverage.

Page 3 line 5. There is a word missing between “reported” and “on”.

Page 3 Methods first paragraph: it might be worth explaining the significance of including IMR data – i.e. to show the proportion of infants who may have been vaccinated at some time but who did not make it to their second birthday, thus altering calculations on coverage rates.

Page 3 Methods second paragraph: the words “In addition, mothers approached for study participation, but excluded from the PROMISE-EBF study due to an intention to formula feed were enrolled in the Good Start Study [18]” do not seem to add anything to the write-up and could be deleted.

Page 7 second paragraph discussion on HIV: while the quoted article deals with the issues of immunizing HIV-immune compromised infants in the USA, I do not think it is the best reference for the discussion from Africa. A better one would be “Measles vaccine WHO position paper. WER 28 August 2009, No. 35, 2009, 84, 349–360 http://www.who.int/wer”. As well, the phrase “further complicated…” needs some explanation i.e. some of those infants have received earlier vaccines but do not receive measles vaccine because their immune suppression is a contra-indication to measles vaccination. I am assuming from the context that the South African MOH probably says “do not vaccinate if severely immune compromised”.

Same issue on page 8 line 8.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests