Reviewer's report

Title: Measles transmission from an anthroposophic community to the general population, Germany 2008 Effect of early intervention on size and duration of measles clusters in school and kindergarten settings

Version: 2 Date: 15 December 2010

Reviewer: Franz Allerberger

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions

REFERENCES

References 3 and 11 seem to be identical.

Please check the use of capital letters in abbreviations of journal names; “Epidemiology and infection” should read “Epidemiology and Infection”, “The Pediatric infectious disease journal” should read “The Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal”, ……

FIGURE LEGENDS

The legend in FIGURE 2 lists “February-August 2008 (N=217), while the legend of FIGURE 3 lists “March-July 2008 (N=217)”. I guess the legend in FIGURE 3 should read February-August too, as Table I lists “March-July (N=161).”

DISCUSSION The last sentence in the third paragraph presently reads: “A considerable percentage of cases in our studies reported complications, indicating that measles is not a mild disease”. Here I disagree, as the fact that 8.7% experienced otitis media, 5.6% diarrhoea or 5.9% mood shifts does not indicate proof of a severe course. In fact, if I were an vaccination opponent, for me this data would underline that in developed countries measles is no longer a problem. I recommend to add an paragraph addressing the risk of late sequelae like SSPE in 1 in 100,000 cases, or mentioning the single patient who experienced seizures. The manuscript should also explain which etiology underlies the terms used in TABLE 1, like “Disturbance of consciousness” and “Mood shifts”; what are these terms supposed to mean in medical nomenclature (transitory ischaemic attacks? Encephalitis?).

Discretionary Revisions

ABSTRACT The first sentence of the second to the last paragraphe should be rephrased avoiding the term “linked into”, e.g. to “Overall, 184 cases could be epidemiologically grouped into 59 cluster.” In the next sentence it could read “Of those, 41 clusters could be linked to households and 13 to schools or kindergartens.”, avoiding the term “could be allocated to”. In the last paragraph...
(Conclusions), please delete “or sceptics)” and rephrase the last sentence, as it is not clear who has to report to whom immediately.

METHODS In the first sentence of the paragraph “Clusters”: instead of “were linked into clusters.”: “were grouped into clusters”.

RESULTS In the first sentence of the paragraph “Laboratory analysis please use the term “laboratory confirmed” instead of “lab confirmed”, as the term “lab” is slang. In the last sentence of the paragraph “Clusters”, a closing bracket at the very end can be deleted. Last paragraph: the “p” in “poisson” in “poisson regression model” should be capital (“Poisson”).

The authors use the term “Kindergarten”. Maybe they can state once what Kindergarten means in Germany, e.g. “Kindergarten (voluntary, children age 4-5)”. In some countries, e.g. Iowa, the term “Kindergarten” equals fist class of elementary school (mandatory, children age 6), in contrast to “preschool”, which equals Kindergarten in Germany.

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