Reviewer's report

Title: Rural-urban differences in neonatal mortality in a least developed province of China

Version: 1 Date: 5 April 2011

Reviewer: Susan Hughes

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions

1. The entire paper needs grammatical, sentence structure, and English language revisions. 2. Methods section: a. Source of data - Unclear why death registry is not used and a sample of data is better. b. Also unclear what all the variables collected are; c. Data Analysis - Are you using Poisson 95% confidence intervals? d. It is unclear what information the rate ratio is adding that isn't obvious from just the death rates with confidence intervals. 3. Results section: Organized unconventionally making it difficult to follow; should start with Table 3 describing your groups, then move into Table 1 mortality rates. 4. Table 4 is difficult to understand. 5. Discussion - too much repetition of results, could be considerably shortened. 5.5 Conclusion - repeats last paragraph of Discussion, delete one of them.

Minor essential revisions

Abstract: 6. Spell out chi-squared; 7. use % sign

Methods: 8. Variable definition - last sentence defines rural two times and urban not at all. 9. Data analysis - never used a t-test could remove reference to it.

10. Entire paper & tables: too much precision in numbers, only need one digit to right of the decimal point; 11. Consistent use of abbreviation NMR once introduced;

12. Table 3 - p-values are never equal to zero, these should be reported as < 0.001; normal misspelled in birth weight characteristics.

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

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests