Title: Monitoring the level of government trust, risk perception and intention of the general public to adopt protective measures during the influenza A (H1N1) pandemic in the Netherlands

Authors:

Willemien W van der Weerd (willemien_van_der_weerd@hotmail.com)
Daniëlle D.R.M. Timmermans (drm.timmermans@vumc.nl)
Desirée D.J.M.A. Beaujean (desiree.beaujean@rivm.nl)
Jurriaan J Oudhoff (j.oudhoff@vumc.nl)
Jim J.E. van Steenbergen (willemien_van_der_weerd@hotmail.com)

Version: 2 Date: 24 May 2011

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear editor,

First we would like to thank you for the useful and helpful feedback we have received. The extra time that was permitted to us to revise the manuscript, allowed us to process the comments of both reviewers thoroughly and enabled us to perform additional data-analysis.

Using the reviewer’s reports and the comments from the associate editor, we have revised the manuscript by using track changes.

**Major revisions**

- In the abstract we have described more clearly the purpose and aim of the study.

- The introduction is revised and states more clearly what this study can offer as opposed to other studies. We describe how this recent study is different from others in a beneficial way.

- We revised our statement with respect to ‘little research has been done’. We describe more clearly that governments know relatively little about the possibly changing influence of trust on deciding to take measures during an ongoing pandemic.

- The methods section is revised, based on the reports of both reviewers. The study-design has been described more clearly. We clarify that data-collection consisted of 16 cross-sectional measurements and that therefore the study-design was not longitudinal. In addition, we describe now more clearly that data was collected ad-hoc from one large national panel of participants. Information about ethical approval was added to this section as well.

- Based on the report of reviewer number one we revised the details of the scales and ranges of the measurements. Now, scales and ranges are consistent throughout the whole manuscript (measurement section, appendix tables).

- Reviewer number two also suggested some revisions regarding the labelling of variables. In previous analysis of the data we have considered to analyse fear, worry and vulnerability as one measure of risk perception. However, results indicated that these variables were two different concepts and therefore we decided to analyse them separately (1. fear and worry; 2. perceived vulnerability). We did choose to change the label ‘reading or hearing information about how to prepare for the new influenza virus’ as ‘receipt of information’.

- Additional analysis regarding time trends has been performed based on the report of reviewer number two. However, we have to accept that the data was collected from different repeated samples from a representative pool of respondents. As such trend analysis has its limitations. We do present the changes over time more clearly.

- To estimate the mean for a period we have averaged the estimates of the means within that period, rather than pool all the observations within the period and use them to estimate the mean. (These two approaches yielded very similar estimates because the sample sizes for these endpoints are quite stable).

- Estimates and 95% simultaneous (Bonferroni) confidence bands for the mean scores or proportions for different variables were computed along the three periods to help identify trends in various endpoints of interest. Results are complemented by estimates and simultaneous (Bonferroni) 95% confidence intervals for the mean difference in scores or proportions from one period to the next.
These results are shown in tables 2 and 3 and these tables are therefore revised. We also added graphs to illustrate the trends when the results indicated that these existed (government trust, perceived vulnerability, reported reasons to accept/refuse vaccination).

**Minor revisions**

- All minor essential revisions (points 3 – 6), as well as all minor issues mentioned by reviewer number one regarding typo’s, tables, labeling and rephrasing of sentences etcetera, are revised.

- Based on the discretionary revisions of reviewer number one we described sentence 3 in the discussion more clearly and revised paragraph 2, sentence one, regarding the periods in which vaccination acceptance was measured.

- We revised unclear sentences on page 10 in the discussion, mentioned by reviewer number two.

- Regarding the details of the questions shown in the appendix, we did not elaborate further on the response options. Because data was gathered by another institution we were not able to find out whether answers were offered to respondents or whether they were the results of open responses.