Reviewer's report

Title: Why the Non-improvement in under five mortality in Uganda from 1995 to 2000? A retrospective analysis

Version: 2 Date: 18 August 2011

Reviewer: Laura C Altobelli

Reviewer's report:

I believe that the title as well as the initial focus of the article continue to be misleading. The most interesting aspect of the article, that of high under five mortality due to malaria in one area of the country, is not reflected in the title nor in the abstract until the last sentence of the abstract.

The authors’ analytical approach to the data could be more rigorous by presuming from the start that any national level indicators on U5MR will be an average of varying in-country levels of the indicator. Also, a basic knowledge of the health situation in the country would have alerted the researchers that a major malaria epidemic had occurred during the study period, so that the need to go through a full analysis of basic determinants would not have been necessary.

The presentation of these epidemiological findings should be more straightforward. Currently the reader is led down a path where she/he does not know where it is leading until after reading through half the paper. By that time the reader’s interest may be lost.

A solution to the above problems and to make it more appealing to the readership could be to refocus this article along the lines of “Malaria: Hidden threat to reaching the Millennium Goals in child health in Uganda”. The analysis could show that most of the standard sociodemographic and health indicators were consistent with a decline in U5MR in all parts of the country. But that the malaria epidemic was likely the responsible factor for the drastic increase in U5MR in one area.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests.