Reviewer's report

Title: A Mid-Term Assessment of Progress Towards the Immunisation Coverage Goal of the Global Immunisation Vision and Strategy (GIVS)

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Reviewer: M. Carolina Danovaro-Holliday

Reviewer's report:

Discretionary Revisions

• Abstract methods: Suggest changing “data” for “estimates” in the first line.
• Abstract results: It gets confusing when switching between 2000 to 2010 and 2005 to 2010 comparisons, particularly when it says “during the five year period”; suggest changing it to something like “between 2005 and 2010”.
• Methods: may want to shorten the last sentence about the Countdown
• Discussion: may want to cut the first sentence of the current third paragraph as it adds nothing

Minor Essential Revisions

• Overall, the article may be shortened by focusing more on the coverage achievements and challenges to reach the GIVS goal, than on the WHO/UNICEF estimation process and its limitations, as they have been published elsewhere and they are not the focus of the paper.
• Abstract background: Please add the years covered by GIVS
• Abstract methods: several countries provide MCV to children in their second year of life, therefore stating that it is for children <12 months is not always accurate
• Background: move first paragraph of discussion to background to provide context from the beginning
• Methods: several countries provide MCV to children in their second year of life, therefore stating that it is for children <12 months is not always accurate
• Methods: may want to shorten the explanation about the WHO/UNICEF estimates; at least remove the part about [tetanus] protection at birth, or better, remove the whole text starting with “The WHO and UNICEF estimates are not the result…”.
• Methods: add a sentence about how global and MDG region averages are calculated (weighted average?)
• Results: this section it is difficult to follow as currently written. The authors may want to consider shortening it, as the data are clearly presented in the tables and annexes. Another suggestion would be to separate countries according to World Bank development level in the tables, to shorten the paragraphs dealing with
results stratified by such categories. Finally, a subheading on the 68 priority countries may help better follow the last two paragraphs of the results section.

• Discussion: move first paragraph to background

• Discussion: add some text to the current second paragraph giving an idea about the % of the world’s population living in countries making vs. not making progress.

• Discussion: shorten the paragraph about the limitations of the estimates, as the length of it distracts from the main message of the paper, i.e., there is progress towards the GIVS coverage goal, but there are several countries not making the mark, with the risk of negative health outcomes. Yes, the WHO/UNICEF estimates have several limitations, including the lack of any sense of their uncertainty, but the main results of the analysis seem to stand; maybe a few countries would switch assessment categories, but those with really low coverage levels are unlikely to have been misclassified.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests