Reviewer’s report

Title: Predictors of Knowledge of H1N1 Infection and Transmission in the U.S. Population

Version: 1 Date: 2 December 2011

Reviewer: Lisa V Smith

Reviewer’s report:

The authors submitted a well-written manuscript in which they investigated whether respondents with lower socio-economic position (SEP) were more likely to have less knowledge about H1N1 compared to those of high SEP. The data were collected on a selected panel of survey respondents from a representative sample of US adults using random digit dial (RDD) and address-based selection methods. The independent and dependent variables were well defined and the statistical methodology was appropriate for the study design. Data were presented on 1,569 respondents. The authors concluded that level of education and house ownership were predictors of knowledge of H1N1 infection and transmission in the United States.

• Major Compulsory Revisions

Results (p. 9): Despite the authors’ detailed description of the study methodology, the authors failed to mention the response rate obtained from the RDD and address-based sample. The response rates reported for some RDD samples have been underwhelming (e.g., 5-40%). Hence, if the response rate is low, the findings would not be very useful when developing policies to reduce transmission of H1N1 in the United States.

Before further consideration of this manuscript, this reviewer requests that the authors provide information on:

1. The response rate in the RDD and address-based sample.

2. How their findings would be generalizable to the US population if the response rate from the RDD and address-based sample is low, as reported in similar studies.

Conclusion (p. 15): The authors do not address any limitations (bias) related to RDD and address-based sampling in general, and cross-sectional studies in particular: How would such bias influence the direction of the estimates derived from their regression models?

• Minor Essential Revisions

Please address the following items:

1. Page 4: Change “Pew Hispanic Center Survey of Latinos” to “Pew Hispanic Center of Latinos”.
2. Page 7: Change “considerations” to “consideration”.
3. Page 9: Change “included: 14% of the population” to “included: 14% of the population”.
4. Page 9: Change “diploma);14% had an income” to “diploma); 14% had an income”.
5. Page 11: Change “significant predictor of knowledge suggesting” to “significant predictor of knowledge suggesting”.

• Discretionary Revisions

Conclusion (p. 15): It would be great if the authors would describe how the predictors (the level of education and house ownership) could be used to effectively increase the knowledge of H1N1 transmission.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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.