Reviewer’s report

**Title:** The cost of child health inequalities in Aotearoa New Zealand: a preliminary scoping study

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 29 March 2012

**Reviewer:** Danny Dorling

**Reviewer's report:**

Discretionary revisions are all that I think are needed. Here are my comments for the authors - all discretionary:

This is a very interesting paper – some suggestions:

1) On economic costing methods.
   You say: “Many of the assumptions of neoclassical economics do not hold for children and are indifferent to concepts of equity”. After “children could you add “,the elderly and those not deamed to be of value in a myriad of other ways” before “..and are indifferent.

2) On Methodology – its would be helpful to have another paragraph and either this definition of Kaupapa or a better one (I like this one): “Kaupapa is a plan, a set of principles and ideas that inform behaviour and customs. Mana whenua (authority in the land) is achieved when a person’s inward kaupapa is aligned with the outward land. When the relationship with the land is lost, people’s inner sense of security and foundation may be lost too.”

   You say classical methods do not “remain contentious in the health sector and do not fit easily within a kaupapa M#ori framework.” It might also be worth noting that they do not fit with Sweden’s “Vision Zero” policy of having no children dying on roads and refusing to put a value on children’s lives. I am sure there are other examples too. See here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vision_Zero. It might also be worth asking whether Sweden is now rich enough a country to be able to not assign value to life while NZ has too low a national income? You say this:

   “Assigning a monetary value to life or health remains antithetical to some. However, economic evaluation is commonly accepted as a consideration in decisionmaking, for example in allocation of government spending, and we believe this
   scoping study is an important initial step in developing more appropriate methods for examining the true costs of inequity”

   But I have seen valuation of the environmental worth of just one island within the
Auckland area which say its entire environmental value is greater than annual NZ GDP. If that is true why are your children worth so little? You go on to say:

“Cost of illness methodology is descriptive, valuing in dollar terms the costs of a particular health problem…” Very often it is prescriptive – used to decide who is treated

3) You need to define “tamariki”, “Whänau” and the acronym “ACC” for non NZ readers, and “GP” for non NZ/UK readers. A glossary at the end is too late – define upon first use is better.

I enjoyed the paper – hope to see it in print.

**Level of interest:** An exceptional article

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'