Reviewer's report

Title: Burden of influenza, healthcare seeking behaviour and hygiene measures during the A(H1N1)2009 pandemic in France: a population based study

Version: 1 Date: 30 July 2012

Reviewer: Winfred Wu

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. In the Results, the authors should present the demographics of the respondents to the overall survey and comment on whether there were any major differences between the demographics of the survey respondents and the overall population the sample represents.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. In parts of the abstract and manuscript, the authors use the terms self-defined influenza and influenza interchangeably. The authors should be more specific when referring to any data obtained from this analysis as related to self-defined influenza, given that no virologic testing was performed to definitively identify whether influenza virus was an actual underlying cause of these self-defined influenza cases.

2. In the Results/Estimated incidence of influenza section, the authors should report on the number of self-defined influenza cases that met the more specific ILI case definition.

3. In the Results/Description of cases section, the authors should report on the total number of cases that were no longer symptomatic at the time of interview.

4. In the Results/Healthcare seeking behaviour section, the authors should clarify in the 3rd paragraph whether the main reasons for consultation were drawn from the overall number of cases with self-defined influenza, or the subset with symptoms that matched the ILI case definition.

5. For Figure 1, it is not clear if the data on “Incidence of consultations for influenza-like-illness” corresponds to subset of self-defined influenza cases from the survey, or if these data correspond to the monthly incidence from the French Sentinel Network. If the former, the authors should also include the trend data from the French Sentinel Network into this Figure as well. If the latter, the Figure legend should be updated to clarify this.

6. Figure 2 should include either a Figure title or else more descriptive label on the Y-axis to define what specific incidence is being reported [Minor issues not for publication]

Discretionary Revisions
1. In the Methods section, it would be helpful to learn if individuals surveyed were given any guidance as to what defined having influenza, and if so, what that guidance was.

2. In the Results/Healthcare seeking behaviour section, the authors report on the proportion of self-defined influenza cases that consulted a physician (corresponding to the data in Table 2). In the Results (Estimated incidence of influenza) and Discussion, authors then report on the similarity in trends between the survey and the French Sentinel Network. The authors should also report on the healthcare seeking behavior of the subset of self-defined influenza cases that met the ILI definition employed within the French Sentinel Network as this data point more directly relates to what proportion of ILI cases in the community are not being accounted for within the sentinel network.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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.