Reviewer's report

Title: Burden of paediatric influenza in the European Union: a systematic review

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Reviewer: Pieter L Fraaij

Reviewer's report:

With interest I read the before mentioned manuscript. Overall this manuscript tries to give insight in the burden of disease of flu in Europe. The authors have done elaborate work to identify papers and the summarized data provide interesting data. I do have however some comments:

1) First of all this paper has its position in a field full of controversy and I feel that the data need to be presented more carefully. For instance the in the background the sentence “many countries ……high risk of morality or hospitalization” I am not comfortable with. I do not agree with this high risk form mortality and data in the text by the authors do not reflect it. I would suggest to read the article carefully and rephrase some passages. It may be considered overly biased ‘pro-vaccination’ and thus neglected. In addition data may one may also be interpreted to show that flu does not often cause severe disease (or are groups to small?)

2) Please provide original references in the line ’……because they have higher viral titers and adults….‘. Are the authors sure that this is the main mechanism for children to be the primary vector of flu transmission? How about preexisting immunity?

3) I had some problems trying to understand the different numbers in the text and flow chart on numbers of articles included (ie how does the 1,002 relate to the 1,153). I may have overlooked something but that may also happen to other readers. I suggest that both text and flow chard correspond.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I participate in research on vacccination fundend by farmaceutical companies. Currently none are associated to the above discussed paper