Reviewer's report

Title: A descriptive study of reportable gastrointestinal illnesses in Ontario, Canada, from 2007 to 2009

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Reviewer: Kevin Pollock

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The article by Vrbova and colleagues is a descriptive study of gastro-intestinal illness in the State of Ontario, Canada from 2007 to 2009.

While the study is relatively robust in terms of methodology, I disagree with the author's view that the findings are novel. Much of the data corroborates that which is already known on the epidemiology of GI infection in both Ontario and outwith this country. I find it odd that cases were excluded from analyses, who had multiple exposures. In the UK experience, it is often the situation that sporadic cases, which are investigated have multiple exposures so excluding them from analyses is not typical of these kinds of infection.

The authors describe in detail the different Salmonella serotypes but do not mention any other pathogen serotypes/strains and whether the epidemiology has changed for these. This would be much more illuminating. Finally, the discussion simply reiterates much of what is in the results and there is little interest for an international readership. While the authors mention some forms of bias, they do not discuss investigator bias - this is a major omission given that the exposures are likely to be elicited from the investigator.