Reviewer’s report

Title: Admission to hospital for pneumonia and influenza attributable to 2009 pandemic A/H1N1 Influenza in First Nations communities in three provinces of Canada.

Version: 1 Date: 13 August 2013

Reviewer: Amy Greer

Reviewer’s report:

This paper uses administrative databases to answer important questions related to influenza hospitalizations in Canada. A common assumption of public health officials is that Aboriginal Canadians experienced increased rates of hospitalization as a result of the 2009 influenza pandemic but robust evidence to support this claim has been lacking. The paper is unique in perspective as the authors have incorporated analyses from three different provinces and made comparisons between residents of First Nations and other residents of the respective provinces as well as between First Nations communities in different geographic areas/provinces. Proper public health planning for vulnerable populations requires that we have an understanding of the multitude of factors at play. These results will contribute to our ability to plan for future pandemics and other public health emergencies where our preferred interventions may differ for different populations. This is the first time in my professional career that I am going to recommend acceptance of the paper with no revisions. I feel that the paper is well written and methodologically sound and makes a useful contribute to the per-reviewed literature in its current format.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes, the research question is well defined.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? The methods are appropriate and well described within the paper. The authors have made significant efforts to address challenges related to the identification of First Nation individuals within the datasets and have used several different methods to do so. I think this is remarkable and a really important aspect of the paper.

3. Are the data sound? Yes, I feel that the data are sound. I also appreciate that Aboriginal leaders in each of the three provinces were consulted related to the research question and the data used in the analysis. Like any study, there are limitations however, the authors have very clearly identified these issues and the potential impact they may have on the interpretation of the results.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes, I feel that the interpretation and conclusions are supported by
the data

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Yes, as stated above, the limitations of the work have been clearly described by the authors and these limitations have been considered during the interpretation of the data.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes, sufficient mention has been made to related studies.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes.

9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes.

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

**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.