Reviewer's report

Title: The geographical and urban-rural disparities in the total prevalence of neural tube defects and its subtypes during 2006-2008 in China: a study on the hospital-based birth defects surveillance system

Version: 6 Date: 8 November 2012

Reviewer: Marilyn Felkner

Reviewer's report:

The authors are to be congratulated on an impressive revision of their original submission.

Minor Essential Revisions

Methods

1) Add the phrase “Prior to 2006” to this sentence “The subjects examined in the CBDMN were all live births and stillbirths more than or equal to 28 weeks GA (if the GA of the births were unknown, those weighing over 1000 g were also monitored). This more clearly makes the distinction in findings from previous studies and this study.

2) “For cases of abnormalities diagnosed by prenatal diagnosis and terminated before 28 weeks GA, was reconfirmed after birth.” The use of the word “termination” would be better understood than “birth” in this sentence.

3) Urban and rural should be quantitatively defined. For example “Urban was defined as cities with population greater than 100,000. All others were classified as rural.(Or whatever the definition was in this study.)

Discussion

4) References 9 and 21 do not seem to be related to genetic mutations in the sentence below.

“A previous study showed that the mutation frequency of methylene tetrahydrofolate reductase (MTHFR) C677T among people living in northern China was higher than that in southern China and a fetus with this mutated gene had a higher risk of NTDs [9,21]”

Discretionary Revisions

The English usage could use one more review to make it sound more professional.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.