Reviewer's report

Title: The role of religious leaders in acceptance of vaccination within a minority group: a qualitative study

Version: 1 Date: 24 March 2013

Reviewer: Thelma Toni-Uebari

Reviewer's report:

The authors have studied a very relevant topic of public health importance, looking at the role of religious leaders in accepting vaccination within a minority group in the Netherlands. They have chosen a qualitative study which is the appropriate research method.

The findings of this study could have important policy implications for the government of the Netherlands.

Major compulsory revisions:
None identified

Minor Essential revisions:
1. Background: Paragraph 2, Line 4
   ‘…an orthodox Protestant minority of 250,000…’ ?? It would be useful to clarify what the figure refers to.
2. Results Paragraph 2, Line 1
   ‘… addressing of the subject vaccination…’. Is this a typo omission?
   ‘…addressing of the subject of vaccination…’ suggested.
3. Results: Religious leaders who focus ….choice. Page 10, paragraph 2, last line before Respondent 3
   ‘Various bible passages but also…’ Is sentence grammatically correct?
4. Results: Dialogue with authorities
   Paragraph 3, Line 4 (page 12)
   ‘…they will not obey to government rules.’ Is this an error/typo?
5. Results: Dialogue with authorities: Paragraph 4 (pages 12/13) Lines 2-4, Line 5
   Sentence beginning ‘In their opinion….’
   Could these sentences be rephrased to improve clarity of understanding?
6. Church order and religious leaders……vaccination: Paragraph 2
   “…everyone … accepts vaccination”
   Is this conclusion correct? Is this a fact identified from the study or other previous studies?
Secondly, the respondents from this group come from RCC and RC. This paragraph contradicts the earlier documentation under Background, paragraph 2, Lines 10 and 11 which states that RCC and RC have intermediate (50-75%) vaccination coverage.

Discretionary revisions:

7. Abstract. Background
Is it necessary to include the phrase ‘-among other interventions-’ in Line 3

8. Use of hyphen (-)
I observed that hyphens were used many times throughout the manuscript, sometimes inappropriately. In some of these instances a comma (,) would suffice.

9. Abstract: Results paragraph
Line 4 ‘…and those who preach not to vaccinate.’ Could it be written as ‘those who preach against vaccination’?

10. Results: Religious leaders who do not address…..vaccination. Page 9, Lines 7-10
Sentence beginning ‘To provide some insight... to vaccination.’ Could this sentence be rephrased to improve clarity of understanding?

11. Results: Religious leaders who preach against vaccination:
Of the 12 respondents that took part in the study, 5 (the majority) came from this group. However, only one quotation (one respondent) was reported in the manuscript. Adding one or more quotations from this group, I think, would reflect better balance in reporting the findings.

‘… owe their authority among congregation members…’
Should this read as ‘…authority over congregation members…’?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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