Reviewer's report

Title: A qualitative study of the coverage of influenza vaccination on Dutch news sites and social media websites

Version: 1 Date: 12 February 2013

Reviewer: Jennifer Pereira

Reviewer's report:

The paper is interesting and makes a valuable contribution to the literature on understanding perceptions of vaccination through online articles and social media. However, it requires major revisions in order to properly and clearly reach its intended audience.

Major compulsory revisions

1) Although it’s clear that the analysis likely took a lot of time and effort, not enough time has been spent on describing what the authors have done so that readers can learn from it and potentially recreate the methodology for other vaccines. This is especially true of the abstract where more information is needed regarding the searches, the time frames of the searches, etc.

2) The Introduction is much too long and needs significant editing. In the first paragraph of Page 5, the authors discuss the study which is the natural end to the Introduction, along with the last sentence of the Introduction on Page 6. The paragraphs regarding influenza, and the vaccine’s controversial nature in the Netherlands, can be shortened considerably.

3) The Method section is incomplete as is. Need more methodological information on how data were analyzed – how any people coded? What was the process? Which languages?

4) Results - Table or flowchart to illustrate the search strategy is needed. How many articles identified, how many did not meet inclusion criteria, how many from social media and news media

5) Table to complement text in Results may help – it’s a lot of information to digest. While the subheadings which denote recurring themes in the content are helpful. Some quantitative data are needed here. Would also be helpful to know more about the news sites – you’ve indicated they range from news print media to anti-vaccination group sites. Reporting actual numbers or ratios would be helpful and would give context to the results.

6) Did anyone identify themselves as a healthcare worker? If so, would be nice to know how many.

7) No news overarching themes as the epidemic progressed?

8) Paper needs proofreading by a native English speaker

Minor essential revisions
9) Abstract – last line of Methods, change “months” to “month”
10) Fourth last line of page 3 ends with |
11) Page 5 – first word should be investigating, not investing
12) Data is plural, should be “data were” (top of Page 7)
13) Last paragraph before Results should say “were also included” instead of “was also included”
14) Page 10, section 1.2 – differences between the flu and a common cold
15) Section 1.3 - last line should read “had not been effective”
16) Page 12 – change “Finish” to “Finnish”

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

No.