Reviewer's report

Title: Sharing experiences: Towards an evidence based model of dengue surveillance and outbreak response in Latin America and Asia

Version: 1 Date: 24 April 2013

Reviewer: Isabel Rodriguez-Barraquer

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The paper by Badureen et al. presents a review of practices, experiences, strengths and limitations of dengue surveillance, outbreak preparedness, detection and response in 10 countries across Latin America and Asia. While the question is relevant and the data collection seems to have been extensive and rigorous, the paper needs major revisions in terms of data presentation/summarizing of findings and discussion. As it stands, the manuscript seems more like a “working paper” from an expert meeting than a synthesis of the findings, and is therefore difficult to read and not very informative.

Major compulsory revisions

Introduction and methods

1. These sections are generally fine. Perhaps it would be good to provide more detailed information about the areas where the interviews were conducted. Also, please be consistent with how the areas are presented. (e.g. in some instances “national level” is in parenthesis and in others it is not, the administrative level of Iquitos, Tarapoto and Moyoamba is not reported, etc.)

Results

2. I believe this section needs lots of work and synthesizing. Some tables (or perhaps even figures) would perhaps be useful to compare the most relevant aspects of the systems across countries and region. Table 1 is not very informative because, while it itemizes some of the findings, it does not really allow for comparison and does not contain additional information (as compared to the text).

3. In addition, paragraphs are too long, include too much information on different aspects and are very difficult to follow. Perhaps it would be better to focus the results on fewer items considered to be the most relevant, and concentrate on those.

4. The list of definition of dengue outbreaks is confusing as several countries seem to have several definitions. Perhaps it would be good to be explicit about the administrative levels that originated these definitions? Very difficult to read.
Discussion

5. The discussion seems to present the recommendations, based on the data, from a WHO-expert meeting. However, the link with the data is not at all clear, and the information provided under each recommendation is not always relevant or well supported by references.

6. Other than providing examples, I do not understand the need for figures 1, 2 and 3 (that seem to be country examples?). Maybe only one would be enough.

7. There are big inconsistencies in the way in which each recommendation is presented and discussed (e.g. only one includes research recommendations, others present lists of response components that are not very well defined, etc).

Minor essential revisions

p.14 – What do you mean by increase in dengue seropositivity? In acute phase samples? In the population?

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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:

declare that I have no competing interests