Reviewer’s report

Title: Avian influenza risk perceptions among Canadian First Nations subsistence hunters: Implications for influenza pandemic plans

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Reviewer: Peter Massey

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Review
Avian influenza risk perceptions among Canadian First Nations subsistence hunters: Implications for influenza pandemic plans

Overall
This manuscript provides a very interesting and worthwhile look at the issue of avian influenza from the perspective of a community engaged in hunting of birds for food.

The methods used, location and findings are relevant and in a field with little work previously published.

Minor Essential revisions

Abstract
• The aim and the results sections were not clear enough and need to be reworked. For example the aim states “and attitudes of Canadian First Nations subsistence hunters”. Attitudes to what?

• The results section should say the total number of people in the group so that the response rate makes sense. In the sentence in lines 58-59 there are two uses of the word ‘them’, so the reader will be unsure of which them is them!

• The writing style needs to be more scientific and clearer. Eg:
“Regarding the use of precautionary behaviours while processing their birds in the bush, the majority of hunters did not wear gloves (n=88; 83.0%) or goggles (n=104; 98.1%), but did wash their hands (n=105; 99.1%) and sanitize their bird processing equipment (n=69; 65.1%) afterwards.”

Could be:
The majority of hunters reported not wearing gloves while processing birds (88/xxx) and 104/xxx reported not wearing goggles. Approximately 99% of Hunters reported washing hands after processing the birds (105/xxx) and 69/xxx reported sanitizing equipment after processing the birds.

Background
The Background set the scene well and leads to the research question.
• In lines 103-104 the authors should note that these occupations are more involved with intensive farming and so would be a different risk to subsistence hunters.

• Throughout the manuscript the authors should avoid using the words ‘their’ and ‘they’ and ‘them’. Not only can these words be offensive for minority groups but also the words can be misleading, as the reader can be left unsure to what they or them the authors are referring to. For example line119: Since handling wild birds and having contact with their aquatic habitats are potential transmission pathways for AIV infections in hunters, it is important to better understand their risk perceptions of avian influenza

Is this the bird’s risk perception, or the hunters??

• Line 122 infers that all Canadian Aboriginal people hunt, this is not the case. Please amend.

• Line 128: need to explain how the hunting is economically important, as just before this point the authors say that hunting is for food for family & community.

• Line 136: References 23 & 24 just refer to one setting and this needs to be acknowledged, so that the reader does not presume that “knowledge and risk perception of avian influenza have been shown to positively influence compliance with recommended protective health behaviours” everywhere AI occurs.

Methods
Use of PAR is very appropriate for this study and the authors give a reasonably good explanation of why it is used here.

• Line 155: does this refer to two people or people from two communities? If two communities, how many people were on the CBAG?

• Line 178: Can the authors explain why English was chosen and not local language

• Line 209-212: Can the authors please justify why the response rate is not 106/173? What were the reasons why 47 people did not receive the surveys?

Results
The results provide a reasonably good description of the findings.

• Again careful on the use of words ‘these’ etc

• The data in Lines 262-276 seems to be all over the place. See comments for the Abstract. Maybe a Table would be better? The Figure 1 did not help much.

• Also note that the headings for Tables and Figures should go with the convention of What/Where/When.

• When did the hand washing occur, presumably directly after bird processing.
Do people have soap in the field and running water?

• Lines 296-298 are not clear, joining three results up by the word ‘respectively’ does not make for a smooth read. This point of local birds with AI impacting behavior seems to be a key one and needs to be set out as a key finding.

• I am not convinced that having text describing the ASR and Yates correction giving different results on all of these fields is required. Can all of these results be put into one table instead?

Discussion

The Discussion provides a good interpretation of the results and reflection on other work.

• Lines 394-396 talk about co-infection being unlikely but then note almost half the participants had a flu vaccination. Can the authors indicate the reasons why people are having the flu vaccination – presumably not because of perceived risk of co-infection.

• Line 430: who is “one’s” referring to? Suggest reword to make the point clear.

• Line 433: include the word ‘other’ precautionary measures. The hunters were washing hands…..

• The important point of local birds with AI driving change did not seem to make it into a recommendation. It would seem reasonable that if AI was found in local birds that a culturally appropriate communication system should be engaged to get the message out asap.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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