Reviewer’s report

Title: What have we learned about communication inequalities during the H1N1 pandemic? A systematic review of the literature

Version: 4
Date: 21 January 2014

Reviewer: Silvio DM Tafuri

Reviewer’s report:

Dear Editor,

thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. I read the paper with great interest, because the topic is very important for public health purpose. Unfortunately, I have a lot of concerns and the paper must be extensively revised before publication.

Major revision
I have a lot of concerns related to the inclusion of editorials in a review. You must rewrite the results section. For each topic, you must state how many papers report results according to your observations. Eg: 10 of 96 paper stated that.…

Discussion must be revised. This section must be structured as follow.
- main findings (what evidence results from your review?)
- strengths and limitations

In the conclusion section you must report the implications for public health authorities.

Minor revision

Abstract:
- background: please, rephrase the sentence “act upon … inequalities”
- results: The sentence “consistent results… outcomes” is too vague for a results section. Please, be consistent in describing the main evidences emerged by the literature review.
- conclusion: delete the sentence “consistently… were identified”. You write “evidence found” … What evidence? It is not clear. Please, explain briefly what evidence have to be included in the development of the future communication campaigns, this is a main objective of your paper.

Key words:
“H1N1, pandemic” or “H1N1 pandemic”? Please clarify

Paper
Background
-The sentence “Such inequalities… health outcome” must be rephrased. You must insert a reference.
-You must add some explanation about H1N1 pandemic (When did it start? How many people involved?)
-what is “form of virus”? Did you mean “strain of virus”?
-The sentence “The pandemic influenza… Spanish flu” is unclear. Please rephrase.
-Please replace “the objectives” with “the aim”

Methods
-What key words did you use for the research? You must state it clearly
-Bee consistent. You must decide to write “Pubmed” (as in the abstract) or “Medline” (as in the text)
-You must explain inclusion and exclusion criteria
-You must report how many paper you find in Pubmed, how many in Embase and how many paper was in both archives
-Sentence “Title…investigations, etc.” is redundant

Results
-54% of studies derived their data from a random sample of population, 42% from a convenience sample, 4% from cluster sampling of the entire population. The remainder of the empirical studies (17%)… 54+42+4+17=117%!!!! Please clarify
-It is unclear if the second paragraph of this section referred only to editorials
-“To describe current … to classify the articles” must be deleted. These sentence is appropriate for method section.
-page 12, first paragraph. You explain the role of social networks and of the traditional forms of mass media. The empirical studies that referred to this sentences probably were carried out among different people settings (youngs and adults or olds). Please explain
-page 13: “motivator”?? “deterrent” ??What means?

Discussion
-“While … measures”. Please delete

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