Reviewer’s report

Title: Annual public health and economic benefits of seasonal trivalent inactivated influenza (TIV) vaccination in 27 countries of the European Union

Version: 1 Date: 19 December 2013

Reviewer: Madelon Kroneman

Reviewer’s report: 

Dear editors,

The paper addresses the benefits of influenza vaccination in the sense of prevented costs in health care and economic costs. It also addresses the benefits of increasing the vaccination rate to 75% of the population at risk. The paper is clearly written and the methods section provides a sound overview of which data were used and how.

I have mainly two comments:

Firstly, I would like to add the words “Estimate of” to the title. When I first read the title, I thought that finely there had been a large scale project, looking into the effect of influenza vaccination in each European country and I was actually a bit disappointed that it was “only” an estimation exercise. However, once used to this fact, I found the paper ok.

Secondly, what is lacking in the discussion, is the fact that influenza vaccination also brings costs in the sense of administering the flu shot and organizing a vaccination campaign. In countries with low VCR, increasing the vaccination coverage comes with a huge budget. I once calculated this for Poland, and it would cost the government millions. So I would like the authors to take this issue in consideration as well, together with who should pay for this increase. Again in Poland, a substantial proportion of the population indicated that they thought that having a vaccination at their own cost would be too expensive and thus a reason to refrain.

I have several smaller comments:

1. I would prefer the cost savings being displayed in Table 4 as well, this would improve the legibility.

2. In the comparison with the US (Kastova), I would prefer to compare the figures per 100 000 population. Since the size of the population in the Kastova study is not mentioned here, it is difficult for the reader to find out whether the results are comparable or not.

3. The abbreviation VCR is not written out anywhere, same holds for the abbreviation LCI.

4. In the methods section several times extrapolation to the other countries is mentioned, without describing how. This is mentioned in the discussion, but I
would prefer to read it in the methods section.

5. In the first paragraph on page 7 it reads: avertable economic burdens were assessed by [……] total costs avoided”. This I do not understand.

**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’ below