Reviewer's report

Title: Iodine Nutritional Status after the Implementation of the New Iodized Salt Concentration Standard in Zhejiang Province, China

Version: 2 Date: 24 June 2014

Reviewer: Simon Williams

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions:

Iodine deficiency remains a problem in a number of low-and middle-income countries, and one that is perhaps understudied by the public health community and so research on this area should be given due attention.

Abstract:

1. I felt that the abstract did not sufficiently account for the implications of the study’s findings.
2. In the methods section of the abstract, participant numbers should be noted.
3. In the conclusions section of the abstract, some attempt to interpret in summary form why there were significant differences between 2011-2013 for urban, and also why this wasn’t the case for rural measurements.
4. From the abstract I wasn’t sure whether your results show that the 2012 policy of adjusting the standard salt iodine concentration was effective, ineffective or potentially harmful at the population level?

Discussion:

1. Again, it wasn’t fully clear whether your study’s results support the government’s decision to reduce the standard salt iodine concentration. It would appear as though from lines 190-192, that this was a successful policy: The median urinary iodine concentration of children aged 8-10 years in the survey of year 2013 falls between 100-199µg/L suggesting that they were in optimal iodine status.” However, as you note in lines 236-7, “At the time the new local iodization policy put forward, iodine nutrition was generally adequate in both urban areas and rural areas”.

Does the significant difference between 2011-2013 suggest that the 2011 iodine levels were too high in urban areas and too low in rural areas, or simply that this is variation across a healthy norm? If the former, then the results support how monitoring of iodine levels can have an important impact. However for the purposes of publication in a research journal like BMC, the findings are less impactful if the change between 2011-2013 merely show variation within a healthy/satisfactory range.

1. Why did the government decide to reduce the standard salt iodine
concentration in 2012?

2. The readability of the manuscript can be improved, and I would recommend further proof reading. E.g. line 66-67: “USI has been considered as world’s best achievements” (either this is poorly expressed, or the claim needs to be significantly adjusted/toned down).

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'