Reviewer's report

Title: Is Drinking Water A Risk Factor For Endemic Cryptosporidiosis? A Case-Control Study In The Immunocompetent General Population Of The San Francisco Bay Area

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Reviewer: Dr Gordon Taylor

Level of interest: A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Advice on publication: Accept after discretionary revisions

This is an interesting paper that would be of interest to those working in the field. However, the paper is difficult to read and confusing in places. This is often due to the inclusion of a large number of figures in the text that could be restricted to the data.

I would therefore like to make the following comments:

I am concerned that the sample size is really too small for a study of this type. This is especially true due to the large number of factors that are being considered. I feel that the authors could make this clearer in the paper (compulsory)

I feel that the conclusions in the abstract are rather too limited. This sections should also start with the fact that Water was not significant, as this was the primary hypothesis, and then move onto other factors. (compulsory)

The bottom on page 4 states that there are 63 age matched controls. I assume that this should be 62? (compulsory)

For the selection of control I feel that the method of 'sequential random digit dialing' should be further explained or referenced. I found the method of recruitment for controls generally rather confusing (especially in relation to how they were matched). I would be grateful if the authors could expand on this. (compulsory)

Page 6: "the three person to person fecal exposures were: Contact with child-care setting, contact with individuals with diarrhea and exposure to diapers or diapered individuals". Should there not be a category for exposure due to sexual contact?

Page 6 Analysis: Spelling mistake change "form" to "from". (compulsory)

Page 10: Until this point the authors have been using OR for the analysis. On page 10 the authors
repeatedly use the term relative risk. It is true that odds ratios are a form of relative risk but generally speaking relative risk is used for the risk ratio. If the authors are using risk ratios at this point then this is an inappropriate measure for a case control study and if they are still using odds ratios then I see no good reason to change the terminology at this point in the paper. (compulsory)

Health status indicators - In the exposure section within the methods section it was indicated that additional information had been collected including "Health Status Indicators" this was not commented on again until you look at table 1 at the bottom where we have indicators as to whether the patient has a known chronic medical condition. Was Chronic condition a significant factor in the model? (discretionary)

The acronyms OR and 95%CI are used with almost every result in this paper. I would suggest that the authors consider commenting at some point in the paper that all results will be OR with 95%CI and then remove these from the rest of the paper. I think that this will make the paper easier to read. (discretionary)

**Competing interests:**

None declared.