Reviewer's report

Title: Feasibility of Identifying Families for Genetic Studies of Birth Defects Using The National Health Interview Survey

Version: 2 Date: 2 February 2004

Reviewer: Jaqueline Hecht

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Review of CLP manuscript

The authors have revised this manuscript but there are still problems:

1. Study question varies by section of manuscript.
   Abstract: “The purpose of this study was to determine whether the NHIS is a useful source to identify informative families ----- defects.”
   Background: The objective of this paper (should be study) is to identify informative families for genetic studies ----- dataset.
   Discussion: The objectives were to identify households by geographical region.
   The authors need to be consistent throughout the paper.

2. The authors estimated the number of birth defects in different categories based on US census. How many would they expect based on the subset of 28,000 households included. This refers to power calculations.

3. Methods: Author confuse percentage and odds ratio in second paragraph. Third paragraph – table 3 single non-familial is highest in South and single familial is highest in Midwest and West.

4. Discussion: The authors should discuss what their data shows, both the positive and negative aspects. They should discuss why they used it, how it has been used before and what they expected and why they did not find that. Right now it reads like a list. The discussion needs to be rewritten to give it a better flow.

I still suggest shortening this paper to a letter or very short report of the efficiency of using this data set.