Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of reporting timeliness of public health surveillance systems for infectious diseases

Version: 2 Date: 30 June 2004

Reviewer: Nkuchia M. M'ikanatha

Reviewer's report:

General

The authors have responded to the comments.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

The parenthetical remark about acute hepatitis A on page 3 should be reexamined—while NNDS have been used to some identify multi-state outbreaks; delays limit their use in outbreak detection. The authors could call the CDC Viral Hepatitis Branch about this concern.

The summary sentence under discussion (page 13) could be tightened since the content follow in paragraphs.

The statement on page 16 starting with “If the ability support outbreak detection at the national level for NNDS, states and CDC programs should facilitate reporting that more closely approximates real-time.” could be revised to convey the need for improved timeliness.

Consider moving the last paragraph on 23 starting with “To improve public surveillance infrastructure…” to the conclusion. This sentence is not discussion of limitation.

Second sentence on page 18—Although this comment about NEDSS is an accurate description of how the system is described, it should be revised or cited.

Conclusion on page 23, please refer to comment on hepatitis A.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No