Author's response to reviews

Title: Compulsory and Recommended Vaccination in Italy: evaluation of coverage and non-compliance between 1998-2002 in Bologna

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Description of the changes made

MAJOR REVISIONS

♦ In reality, the differences are not so great as to bring about a strong impact on public health; we are nevertheless speaking of differences occurring within a single city where such differences between one district and another may represent an important factor. It is true that there is herd immunity, but we must also take into account the steady arrival of immigrants, mostly from Africa where polio outbreaks persist. We should not overlook what happened in Holland and Canada regarding polio, and in the countries of the former USSR regarding diphtheria, where the lowering of vaccine coverage led to cases of polio and diphtheria, diseases that had long disappeared.

♦ The monitoring of immunization coverage does not make it 'possible to follow trend in the incidence of preventable diseases'. The sentence actually read: *The monitoring of immunization coverage is therefore a valid tool which, together with the trend of the incidence of preventable diseases, makes it possible to assess the strategies adopted, to estimate the efficiency of “in field” vaccinations, and finally to verify the progress carried out and identify any possible problematic areas.*

This sentence has in any case been replaced with the one suggested by the reviewer.

♦ The phrase 'newborn residents on 31 December' has been changed to “children who were under one year old as of 31 December

MINOR REVISIONS

♦ The acronyms have been spelled out
♦ Whooping cough has been changed to pertussis
♦ The phrase 'the most representative vaccinations'” has been changed to ‘the compulsory and recommended vaccinations’
♦ All the other phrases have been changed as requested by the reviewer (also discretionary revisions)