Reviewer's report

Title: A large community outbreak of waterborne giardiasis - delayed detection in a non-endemic urban area

Version: 3 Date: 2 March 2006

Reviewer: gunther f. craun

Reviewer's report:

General

-----------------------------------------------
Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached) None needed. I found the article well organized and well written. I agree with the analyses and conclusions. In fact, I intend to use the article, when published, as an example of how an investigation should be conducted and why early detection is important. Well done!

-----------------------------------------------
Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)Note: all minor concerns--Figure 2 not Figur 2; Figure could be redone slightly--maybe risk ratio or relative risk instead of risk rate--and move RR and CI just above the last two lines; Under Environmental Investions, I would not say that A is cross-connected to B--just that it is interconnected since both are potable supplies (cross-connection usually implies a connection with a possible source of contamaination); under clinical presentation respectively not respectively2);

-----------------------------------------------
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Several questions came to mind when reading this. If the authors can add brief explanations, it might be helpful to readers. In the catchment areas, especially for A, were there grazing animals and water animals (perhaps beaver or similar water animals living there?) I am not familiar with such animals in Norway, but we have lots beaver here that become infected and contaminate water supplies. Controls that had traveled outside the country were excluded; were there any cases that had traveled outside the country. I presumed not but should you say something about that? I was also interested in the prescriptions for metronidazol. There was an excess of some 2500 but could you add a brief statement about the usual number (about 2000) and speculate on why these are prescribed. Is it due to cases associated with foreign travel?

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests. Although I do publish and conduct research on the causes of waterborne disease outbreaks in the USA, this should in no way be considered a competing interest.