Reviewer’s report

Title: Management of environmental health issues for the 2004 Athens Olympic Games: is enhanced integrated environmental health surveillance needed in every day routine operation?

Version: 2 Date: 28 November 2006

Reviewer: Denis Zmirou-Navier

Reviewer’s report:

General
The revised version meets most of the suggestions and comments made in the reviews. However, further improvements can be achieved that would render the paper more usable for interested bodies.

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

Summary. Absence of information on the timing of the surveillance is troublesome. In the beginning of the Results section, authors might want to state it shortly (e.g.: ‘Between January 2003 and September the 30th, 2004, 196 inspectors conducted 8562 inspections, etc’).

Discussion. The revised version includes some additional information on how the authors envision extension of the Olympic Games enhanced surveillance system to routine situations, as suggested in the review. They do not address with practical detail, however, what components of the system they see as essential, which could be slackened (if any) etc, since it is very unlikely that the important efforts that were made during the preparation and development of the Olympics would be maintained in a more routine situation. Given that this is a key conclusion of the paper, authors might want to expand on these issues. For instance, could they be more explicit about how they would recommend categorization of priorities for premises’ inspection, based on a risk approach?

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

Authors state (p 21) that “Registry forms could be more simple and concise.” Are the registries that were designed for this surveillance available in an accessible document? If so, could authors give usable references?

The authors provide some justifications to the discrepancies in the time frame of figures 2, 3 and 4, as requested. However, unless I overlooked this reading the paper, these reasons are not explained in the text, such that the reader might not understand why the described trends range from 100 to 300 days.

Reference 17 is incomplete

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests