Reviewer's report

Title: The cost of uncomplicated childhood fevers to Kenyan households: implications for reaching international access

Version: 1 Date: 6 July 2006

Reviewer: Stefan Peterson

Reviewer's report:

General

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
YES, BUT IT WOULD BENEFIT FROM STATING THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE COST ANALYSIS MORE CLEARLY e.g. HOUSEHOLD
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
YES

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
PRIMARY DATA NOT PRESENTED IN THIS MODELLING PAPER BUT REFERENCES GIVEN FOR MOST ASSUMPTIONS

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
?

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
YES BUT MORE THOROUGH DISCUSSION AS BELOW WOULD BE DESIRED

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
YES

7. Is the writing acceptable?
YES

THIS IS AN INTERESTING ATTEMPT TO MODEL COSTS OF FEVER TREATMENT. I AM NOT REALLY FAMILIAR WITH SIMILAR ATTEMPTS, BUT CONFESS NOT TO BE ON TOP OF THE LITERATUREâ€¦

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

1) PLEASE STATE PERSPECTIVE OF COST ANALYSIS MORE CLEARLY

2) I AM NOT CLEAR ON â€œPER CAPITA INCOMEâ€ DO AUTHORS MEAN GDP/CAPITA? PLEASE CLARIFY AND REFERENCE. HOW RELEVANT IS THE 1 DOLLAR/DAY VALUATION TO A HOUSEHOLD â€œI CAN SEE IT RELEVANT A SOCIETAL LEVEL â€œ PLS DISCUSS â€œ SEE ALSO NO 4 BELOW

3) THE AUTHORS WRITE â€œAVERAGEâ€ CONSISTENTLY â€œ IS THIS TO BE TAKEN AS MEAN OR MEDIAN (OR MODE) â€œ ALL OF WHICH ARE â€œAVERAGESâ€ WHICH IS THE IMPLICATION OF USING MEAN OR MEDIAN COST ESTIMATES?

4) THE AUTHORS STATE THAT IT WOULD NOT INCREASE COSTS TO SHIFT MANAGEMENT TO FACILITIES. HOWEVER, THAT DISREGARDS THE FACT THAT CASH OUTLAYS FOR HOME BRANCH 1 IS 37.5 KSH, WHILE FOR H FAC BRANCH 2 IT IS 25+37.5=60 KSH. I WOULD SUSPECT HOUSEHOLD DECISION MAKING IS MOST AFFECTED BY THE NEED FOR CASH OUTLAYS FAR AHEAD OF USE OF (WOMENâ€™S) TIME. A SEPARATE DISCUSSION OF CASH OUTLAYS VS TIME USE WOULD BE IN PLACE AND SOME REFERENCE TO DECISION MAKING LITERATURE IN HOUSEHOLD AND CRITERIA USED. SIMILARLY A GENDER PERSPECTIVE COULD BE DISCUSSED WHILE PRESUMABLY IT IS MOSTLY WOMENâ€™S TIME THAT IS SPENT/SAVED IN THIS ANALYSISâ€¦

5) I MISS A DISCUSSION (OR MODELLING) OF MY OBSERVATION THAT CHILDHOOD FEVERS HAVE
MANY DIFFERENT REASONS BEYOND MALARIA, AND MANY RESOLVE SPONTANEOUSLY E.G. ALL THE VIRAL FEVERS MY KIDS KEEP GETTING. PRESUMABLY EARLIER TREATMENT WOULD INCREASE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF FEVER INCIDENTS TO BE TREATED, PERHAPS FROM BRANCH 3 TO 2?

6) SIMILARLY A DISCUSSION OF COSTS INCURRED TO THE HEALTH SYSTEM (AND THUS SOCIETY AT LARGE) FROM SHIFTING MORE AND BENIGNER (?) FEVERS WITH ACTs WOULD BE HELPFUL

7) IS THERE NO LITERATURE ON SIMILAR STUDIES IN THIS OR RELATED FIELD THE AUTHORS COULD REFER TO IN THE DISCUSSION SECTION?

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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)

8) IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW COSTS WERE CONVERTED BETWEEN YEARS

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

9) "SCENARIO 1 " REDUCING WAITING TIME " THE WORD "WAITING TIME" GIVES DIFFERENT CONNOTATIONS THAN INTENDED

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'