Author's response to reviews

**Title:** Impact of flu on hospital admissions during 4 flu seasons in Spain, 2000-2004.

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**Author’s response to reviews:** see over
Madrid, 3 July, 2007

Dear Editor,

Thank you for sending us our manuscript entitled “Impact of flu on hospital based morbidity during 4 flu seasons in Spain, 2000-2004”. We are again grateful to both reviewers for revising, once again, our manuscript and for providing useful comments.

We have taken all the comments into consideration and have, where possible, tried to clarify, change or add more information.

Please find below our replies to each of the two reviewers comments and queries.

We have modified the title of the manuscript to “Impact of flu on hospital admissions during 4 flu seasons in Spain, 2000-2004.”

Also, we have gone through the formatting checklist in order to make the manuscript compliant with the format of your journal.

We appreciate your revision of the new version of this manuscript and look forward to hearing from you.

On behalf of all the authors,
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Reviewer 1 – Douglas M Fleming

General Comments

- Regarding the incongruity in the peaks, the authors feel that at this time there is not enough information to further explain the delays seen.

1) Thank you for the comment; it has been included in the abstract.
2) We have removed the sentence
3) These have been corrected
4) Wording has been changed on ‘morbidity’ throughout the manuscript
5) Also re-formulated
6) We have gratefully accepted your suggestions for the sentence for the paragraph and feel comfortable that it reflects the ideas we wanted to transmit.

Reviewer 2 – William C Thompson

We agree with the reviewer that we did not present the hospitalizations as weekly hospitalizations in the previous manuscript and hope this has been clarified in the text and tables of the current manuscript.

With regards to multiplying the rates by the number of weeks in the epidemiological weeks, this would make calculating the excess burden by week difficult as the epidemic and non-epidemic periods have different lengths. We have therefore preferred not to include this suggestion in our current study.

With regards to the viral isolation rate, the 30% is the threshold which is set by the National Influenza Surveillance System (NISS). We obtained information on flu epidemics from the system and did not have access to the raw data to adjust the analysis for a lower viral isolation rate. We welcome your suggestion and will mention it to those persons currently working on NISS.