Reviewer’s report


Version: 1 Date: 8 March 2007

Reviewer: William C Thompson

Reviewer's report:

General

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

1) In general this is a very nice manuscript with interesting results.

2) The excess hospitalization rates need to be described more clearly. The units don't make any sense with respect to the previous literature. Are these rates per week, per month, or per year?

3) The excess numbers of hospitalizations seem to be more reasonable so it seems that the excess rates simply need to be described more clearly. It would also be helpful to describe how you converted from excess rates to the excess number of hospitalizations.

4) The excess hospitalization rates need to be compared to the previous literature. Here are some examples of excess hospitalization manuscripts that they could be compared to.
   a) Barker 1986
   b) Simonsen et al 2000
   c) Neuzil et al 2000
   d) Izurieta et al 2000
   e) Thompson et al 2004

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: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interests.