Reviewer's report


Version: 2 Date: 31 May 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)

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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)

I believe that all the hospitalization rates presented in the manuscript are hospitalizations per 100,000 epidemiologic week - not hospitalizations per 100,000. The author has mentioned this at the beginning of the analysis section but I think they need to state that clearly when discussing the results in the results section. One version of Figure 1 states this but not the other Figures and tables.

I think the rates can be converted to hospitalizations per 100,000 by multiplying the rates by the number of epidemiologic weeks. This would allow the author to make comparisons to other estimates in the literature. I think the rates for children are similar to other published estimates but I think the rates for adults is a little lower than previously published estimates.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

The viral isolation rate of 30% for defining epidemic periods is very high. It would be interesting to see what the estimates would look like if you didn’t use such a high viral isolation rate.

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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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.