Reviewer's report

Title: Use of Formative Research in Developing a Knowledge Translation Approach to Rotavirus Vaccine Introduction in Developing Countries

Version: Date: 5 June 2007

Reviewer: Richard T. Mahoney

Reviewer's report:

General

The effective introduction and sustained use of rotavirus vaccines are important goals for global health. This paper can help to achieve those goals by assisting in developing improved methods for justifying to policy makers the importance of rotavirus vaccines. Knowledge Translation (KT) represents an important new method. The highlighting of the application of KT to rotavirus vaccines is valuable.

------------------------------------------------------------------------

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

A significant omission of the study is not including in-country private sector vaccine company personnel among the interviewees. This should be mentioned in the section on study limitations.

On page 9, the authors state that it is inaccurate to say that improved hygiene, access to clean water, and use of ORS are effective. There seems to be an error in the wording.

On page 17, the authors say that the references (17 – 19) assume that the disease is a high priority. This reviewer found that the papers by Mahoney and Maynard and by Clemens and Jodar explicitly call for the conduct of disease burden and cost effectiveness studies as a critical step in vaccine introduction. To make their point, the authors do not have to make an assertion about lack of awareness of the importance of disease burden in previous literature. This reviewer understands that the point of the paper is to provide data to support a new field of Knowledge Translation. However, the authors refer only anecdotally to evidence supporting the use of Knowledge Translation and diarrheal diseases. The authors state that their work is of a confirmatory nature. Does this paper present new findings or provide new insights? If the authors were to dig deeper in their data and prepare a comparative analysis with previous publications looking at the country level, they may identify new insights and new findings. In addition, the Ukraine has not often been studied in these contexts. What did the authors learn about the Ukraine that distinguishes it from other countries? A further suggestion is to indicate how the work is contributing directly to the implementation of the Rotavirus Vaccine Program. How did the work help the RVP in a way that previous work could not?

------------------------------------------------------------------------

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

Reference 4 deals with GAVI, but the place in the article where the reference is located does not mention GAVI, but WHO.

On page 5, there is mention of the Rotavirus Vaccine Program. It would be useful to say more about the Program such as its institutional home, mission, activities, and the amount of funding.

On pages 5 & 6 and elsewhere, it is recommended that the countries be listed in alphabetical order.

On page 7, the authors state that the “findings revealed a wealth of information.” It would be better to let the reader decide about the quality of the information. Perhaps “detailed” might be a better word.

On page 12, the authors introduce the term “formative survey results.” The authors should define the term.
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

On page 8, it would be useful to define “oblast.”

On page 16, the authors refer to the “Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization.” The current name is “GAVI Alliance.”

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