Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence of anemia and deficiency of iron, folic acid, and zinc in children under 2 years of age and beneficiaries of the Mexican Social Security Institute.

Version: 2 Date: 10 September 2007

Reviewer: ann hill

Reviewer's report:

General:
The authors have made a genuine effort to address the points raised previously, but some of the resulting inserts to the text are wrong and some are too lengthy.

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

1. (Methods) Asterisks in the formula for adjusting Hb for altitude are not acceptable. This formula needs to use appropriate mathematical symbols.

2. (Results) The new section on p9 regarding the age distribution of the children does not tally with Table 1: In the RR and IO groups respectively, those aged <6m represent 13.2% and 4.9% of the sample (not 37.5% and 26%); those 6-11m represent 38.2% and 31.0% (not 32% and 27.8%); and those aged 12-23m represent 48.7% and 64.1% (not 30.6% and 46.1%).

3. (Results) p10 para 2: The age groups are incorrect. This sentence should read ‘…for children <6 months the prevalence was 6.8%; for children 6-11 months it was 26.7%’.

4. (Results) p13 para 2: In IO, the prevalence of folic acid deficiency <6m was 0.4% (not 6.6%).

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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)

1. (Results) p9 para 2, penultimate line: infections make it difficult to assess the nutritional status of zinc and iron (rather than affecting the nutritional status per se) so this sentence needs rewording.

2. (Results) p9 last para, penultimate sentence: the age group should be 12-23m (not 11-23m).

3. (References): errors still exist e.g. Habicht (not Habich); Penny (not Peny); World Health Organization (not Organization WH); Summary (not Sumary) and all the references need careful checking.

4. Tables 4, 6 and 7: For consistency say 95% CI (not IC 95%).
5. Figures 1 and 2: axis <6 months (not 1-5 months)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. (Results) p11, para 3: ‘Of all cases… fewer than half …’
2. (Discussion) p16: the new section giving the context could be shortened and made more succinct. The differences in the service packages provided by RR and IO, including provision of haematinics, are particularly relevant to include, as it now appears from the authors’ responses that the South IMSS-IO were actually receiving food aid.

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 limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests