Reviewer’s report

Title: Population Mortality during the Outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in Toronto

Date: 10 December 2006

Reviewer: Sik To Lai

Reviewer’s report:

General
The lack of increase in general mortality may not be accounted for by the maintenance of access for life-threatening conditions during the SARS outbreak alone. In a study published by Lo JYC, et al. Respiratory Infections during SARS Outbreak, Hong Kong, 2003”, Emerg Infect Dis 2005; 11:1738-1741) showed a possible association between population-based hygienic measures and the reduced incidence of influenza and other acute viral respiratory infections. Complications in patients suffering from chronic medical problems precipitated by acute viral respiratory infection are thus decreased in incidence. This possibility can affect the overall mortality rate and warrants some discussion.

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

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct): The legends on the left side of the graphs in Figures 1 and 2 appear the same though one is on the actual number of deaths and one is on the number who died per 100,000 of the population. Amendment is required.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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

Declaration of competing interests: I declare that I have no competing interests