Reviewer’s report

Title: Evaluating human papillomavirus vaccination programs in Canada: should provincial healthcare pay for voluntary adult vaccination?

Version: 2 Date: 14 February 2008

Reviewer: Ralph Insinga

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have generally done well in responding to the points raised previously and significantly improved the transparency of the paper.

I appreciate the value of publishing a general modeling framework, even if future enhancements are desired for improving the generalizability of the model. In this instance, many of the assumptions, such as lack of age-dependency in sexual partner rates, lack of sexual activity outside of the vaccine age range among females, uniform age of sexual debut and lack of new sexual partners for males over time are gross simplifications that can have important impacts on the ability to eradicate HPV types over time. Thus, I would view this paper as a preliminary step in developing a realistic model of population behavior, but would be hesitant to draw firm policy conclusions from it until further modifications were made.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. In light of these concerns, the Conclusions section of the Abstract needs to better reflect the preliminary nature of these results. I would suggest the following points be made in the Conclusion section of the Abstract:

Our model results are preliminary in that we have made a number of simplifying assumptions including a lack of age-dependency in sexual partner rates, a lack of sexual activity outside of the vaccine age range among females and a uniform age of sexual debut. Under these conditions we find that vaccination of women aged 14-26 in Canada may be of value, but further work is desired to enhance the external generalizability of our results.

2. Would also suggest that addressing these limitations be raised among the desired actions described in the section on future work in the last paragraph of the conclusions.

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I am employed by Merck & Co., Inc. manufacturer of an HPV 6/11/16/18 prophylactic vaccine.