Reviewer's report

Title: Establishing a Nationwide Emergency Department-based Syndromic Surveillance System for Better Public Health Responses in Taiwan

Version: 7 Date: 19 August 2007

Reviewer: Julie Pavlin

Reviewer's report:

General
Very nice rewrite - good flow and description of the system and problems/solutions.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
None

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

Mention of NYC visit - need to establish that their syndromic surveillance program has been operational since 2001 - NOT the health department.

Multiple instances of needing different word endings or sentence structure throughout. Example - top of page 3, first line, delete "which", change "recruiting" to "recruited". 2nd line, delete "was implemented"

Next paragraph:
Extra "." in second line of next paragraph.
Remove comma after RODS, change "the" to "a"
Add "the" "...collaborated with "the" RODS group..."
Change "to advance" to "of"
Add "the" in front of United States (and add s to end of State)
Change national wide to nationwide
Last sentence "GIS was also important to our syndromic surveillance system and considered in the ...

Etc.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
2nd paragraph of discussion - last sentence. Very important point - I would add a little more that this system can actually be used to change policy that can improve health - has notified you that you need to explore further moving up the influenza vaccination date (they just did this in northern Brazil - no one ever looked there closely before and they recently realized that they start the flu season months before southern Brazil).

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: Needs some language corrections before being published

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.