Reviewer’s report

Title: Improving immunisation rates in high risk children: A comparison of populations vaccinated in a public service and in a private hospital setting in the same area.

Version: 1 Date: 11 January 2008

Reviewer: Mary Patricia Nowalk

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory revisions

Part of the difficulty in interpreting this manuscript is that it lacks sufficient context for the international reader to compare and contrast the findings with his knowledge and understanding of research based on his own country. This paper would be improved by additional background on the vaccination policies and modes of delivery in Italy. Do parents pay for immunizations at private hospitals? What are the contraindications and false contraindications for the vaccines studied?

Secondly, it would benefit from clearer English writing as there are many places where it is difficult to interpret the authors’ precise meaning. Further, there are several issues that require explanation for complete understanding. For example, how was appropriateness (timeliness?) of vaccination assessed? Because of the varying number of doses and ages for vaccination, this must be described in detail. The authors started this process, but it is not completely clear when immunization is considered late (one of the doses meets the criteria? More than one?) Also, this would be clearer if put into a table.

The title seems to be inappropriate given that the number of high risk children vaccinated at each site is so small, this is not really a study of those children, but a comparison of children vaccinated at two different types of settings.

The interview questions seem to be missing some critical information such as whether the parents are married or single, their relative income level, etc.

The results on page 7-8 should indicate percentages as well as numbers.

What does unavailability of vaccines mean? Were there temporary or long term shortages of one or more vaccine? Is there frequently a supply issue in public vaccination settings?

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: 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.