Reviewer's report

Title: Spread pattern of the first dengue epidemics in the City of Salvador, Brazil

Version: 2 Date: 28 August 2007

Reviewer: Goro Kuno

Reviewer's report:

All major compulsory revisions and minor essential revisions requested to the authors were explained very well and clearly to the satisfaction of this reviewer. The new information and references provided filled the blanks in the discussion in the original manuscript. The moving film (attachment) is extremely useful for many readers studying the spreading pattern of dengue in urban areas.

For those reasons, I strongly recommend acceptance of this revised manuscript.

Although the response to the following comment is not required, this reviewer strongly advises the authors to modify the wording of the same statement in Discussion and Conclusion: "it would theoretically be possible to establish a blockade around the epicenter of the epidemic....."

The statement in the revised text is correct, since it refers only to theoretical possibility. However, since the word "blockade" is such a strong word, it provokes a fear of quarantine-type measure. While such a measure is possible in such countries as communist countries (such as Cuba) or countries under other types of totalitarian political system, realistically, "theoretically possible public health measures" may never become possible in democratic countries, such as Brazil. Even in democratic countries, politics and cultural traits vary considerably from country to country. In Singapore, where repeated household infestation with Ae. Aegypti, if found, has been punishable with fine (and even jail term) by law, reluctance (or outright refusal) of many residents there to open door when mosquito inspectors visit their houses has been one of the difficulties for enforcing the rather draconian law on the part of government. "Blockade" essentially entails regulating movement of residents within the dengue areas, which will be similarly difficult to enforce due to expected resistance of the residents against such a measure by the city or government. As a result, while >70% of the residents of Singapore comply with the vector control measure, because not everybody complies, dengue spread recently, resulting in the largest DHF outbreak in history. That is ironic, since Singapore has been considered for many years an excellent example of dengue control success stories.