Reviewer's report

Title: Comparing Estimates of Influenza-Associated Hospitalization and Death among Adults with Congestive Heart Failure Based on how Influenza Season is Defined

Version: 2 Date: 23 August 2007

Reviewer: marie R GRIFFIN

Reviewer's report:

General

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

the way attributable hospitalizations are presented does not make sense. Only the numerator is relevant. It is clear that although the 4 methods give similar HR and RR, the attributable numbers are quite different. It would be more meaningful if presented as a rate, with the denominator being the population, not the estimate number of events during the defined influenza season

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

the authors recognize many of the limitations. Primarily, the reference period is different in all the analyses. In some (with narrow flu seasons), the reference period include lots of other winter viruses. In other models, the reference is primarily summer. It would help to eliminate summer months, since the more appropriate reference would be winter months when influenza is not circulating.

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: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

i have not competing interests