Reviewer's report

Title: Lessons learned from a demonstration program to sustainably reduce the burden of anaemia and hookworm in women in Yen Bai Province, Viet Nam.

Version: 1 Date: 13 February 2009

Reviewer: Theresa W. Gyorkos

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Overall comment: This manuscript describes the implementation of a micronutrient and deworming program in two districts in Viet Nam. The importance of this manuscript is in the detail provided, such that other settings will be able to easily understand and adapt the administrative and organizational processes to their own context.

Specific comments: (all classified as minor essential revisions)

The WRA referred to in the manuscript does not include the full range (ie. 15 to 49) and so it should be specified that it refers to women between the ages of 16 and 45.

All instances referring to the micronutrient supplement should say iron-folic acid and not iron-folate, as it is the folic acid form which would be in the supplement.

‘Ferrous’ should be ‘ferrous’.

On page 6, the reference #29 is incorrect…it should be reference #27…Authors should review all references and ensure that the citation in the text matches what is in the reference list.

Early on in the Methods section…which should really be renamed Methods and Results, as results are incorporated into this section (which is allowable here given the programmatic nature of the manuscript)…there should be a concise description of the organization administrative structure of governance level (ie. village, commune, district, province)...

On page 9, top, it is unclear what is considered a ‘high’ prevalence of hookworm. Why are the results of the published baseline survey not reported here?

The published baseline survey contains NO date. This omission should be corrected in the current manuscript by specifying the year in which the baseline survey was carried out. The date should also appear in Table 1.

VHW should probably always be referred to as VHWs. Should the ‘commune health worker’ on page 14 be a VHW?

‘Tablets’ should be used throughout and ‘capsules’ removed.
What is the justification for observing women for 30-minutes post-administration of tablets (page 14)? If this was to observe any side effects, then a longer period would probably have been better. (Do you expect side effects to occur within 30 minutes?)

Definitions for full compliance and partial compliance are needed (page 15).

Page 16…it is helpful to say that ‘... anaemia prevalence had fallen from 37.5% to 19.5% and hookworm prevalence form 78.2% to 25.2%’...Is this correct?

On page 16, add July 2006 after ‘...first compliance survey’...

On page 17, para 1, it is unclear if it was the VHWs or the women who reported ‘...an inadequate understanding....’. Please clarify.

On page 17, para 1 line 3 from bottom...specify September 2007 as the 16-month monitoring survey.

Table 1 needs to be cited in the text. (I could not find it.)

On page 20, the situation of treating pregnant women is discussed. In my opinion, there needs to be a stronger consideration of inadvertent deworming treatment of girls and women in the first trimester of pregnancy...This demonstration study may not have collected the necessary data to determine how many women would have been so treated...but it should be recommended that other programs should incorporate a follow-up mechanism of some sort to ascertain if any woman who, subsequent to deworming, becomes pregnant (at what date, etc.)...This would be a very valuable source of this type of data, currently unavailable. Perhaps it would also be appropriate to include advice regarding local hospitals adding a column to a birth registry to indicate whether women being admitted for delivery had had deworming in the previous x months.

On page 21, the origin of the iron supplements is detailed, but not the albendazole. This should be added.

In Table 2, page 32 the 2nd and 3rd box...the word ‘sustainability’ should be replaced by ‘implementation’...These incentives clearly influenced the implementation of the current program. Whether this is sustainable or not is a different issue. For this reason, the word ‘sustainable’ should be removed from the title.

Figure 1. Additional lines need to reflect the 4 deworming cycles...December 2006 should be added to indicate the mid-term review. May 2007- March 2008 should be added to the WIFS continued in 2 pilot districts box. WRA needs to be specified as 16-45 years of age.
**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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.