Reviewer's report

Title: A structured framework for improving outbreak investigation audits.

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Reviewer: saulat jahan

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Comments
This is a well written, interesting paper with useful information for practical application. The authors present a structured framework for improving the audit investigations of outbreaks. Such structured evaluation frameworks are required in public health practice to improve the outbreak responses of organizations, at local and national levels.

Few discretionary and minor revisions are required in this paper.

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

Appendix 1: Certain audit trigger questions listed in Appendix 1 may need further clarification for the participants, in order to respond. For example: Question: 4 under the heading, ‘Response’ and subheading, ‘Epidemiological investigation’ states, “Was the outbreak recognised in time to investigate the cause?”

Here the question arises whether the participants are aware of the time line for ‘in time’ investigation of the cause?

Similarly, under the same subheading of ‘Epidemiological investigation’, Question: 15 states, “Was frequent contact maintained with infected people to ensure that they received appropriate support or counselling?”

Are the participants aware of the criteria for ‘frequent contact’?

Do the participants receive some attached documents with relevant definitions or explanation of the terms, used in audit trigger questions? If yes, the authors may mention it in the text, for the readers.

Minor Essential Revisions

Page 5 --- para 3 --- Line 3 --- ‘Box 1’ should be ‘Table 1’

Page 8 --- Para 1 --- line 5 --- The sentence, “Reviewing the questions can be time consuming and is best conducted separately by participants ensure a wide range of issues are considered”, is not clear. This sentence may be rephrased.

Reference to Box 2 should be included in the text

Figure 1 should have a caption.

Table 2 mentions, “Prophylaxis of contacts of hepatitis A case, NSW, 2006” under the column heading of ‘outbreaks’; it may be rephrased.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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