Reviewer's report

Title: Timeliness of National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System in Korea: a cross-sectional study.

Version: 2 Date: 18 February 2009

Reviewer: Trang Q Nguyen

Reviewer's report:

The re-write of the review of the Korean National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System is an improved version and addresses sufficiently the areas of concern previously noted.

Major compulsory revisions:
None

Minor essential revisions:
1. Abstract Conclusions: Add a sentence or two for key recommendations derived from the findings.

Discretionary revisions:
1. Abstract Methods, 1st sentence, rewrite:
   # “Six notifiable infectious diseases reported relatively frequently were included in this study.”

2. Abstract Methods, 3rd sentence: replace “imported” with “emerging”

3. Abstract Methods, last sentence, add this phrase to the end of the sentence:
   # “[…distribution of time lags at each surveillance step] between symptom onset and date of notification to the Korean Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC).”

4. Abstract Results, 1st sentence, rewrite:
   # “The proportion of cases reported in time was lower for diseases groups with a recommended time limit of 1 day compared with 7 days (60%-70% vs > 80%).”

5. Abstract Results, 3rd sentence, add phrase:
   # “The median time from onset to registration at the local level ranged….“

6. Methods, Data Collection:
   # 2nd sentence, edit: “…for this study that were reported in more than….”

   # 3rd and 4th sentences, rewrite: “Reported in fewer numbers, dengue fever was also included to compare its differences with other disease groups. Despite having reports of more than 100 cases every year, tuberculosis and malarias
were not selected because of…..”

7. Methods, Definition of time lags:
# 1st sentence, edit: “dates of onset, diagnosis….”
# Remove sentence, redundant: “This is the time lag to central appraisal for each case.”

8. Methods, Statistical Analysis:
# Remove sentence, redundant: “The criteria for timeliness are specified by the Contagious Diseases Prevention Law.”
# 4th sentence, edit: “…reported by the given time limit.”

9. Results
# Remove “according to Chi-square test” or “by K-S test” from parenthetical p-values, the extra language is unnecessary

10. Results, Proportion of cases reported in time
# 7th sentence, edit: “…the diseases in Group I and IV (diseases of immediate concern) had….”

11. Results, Cumulative distribution of time lags
# 2nd sentence, edit: “Time lags for HFRS are….”
# 8th sentence, add phrase: “Although the medians…different from each other (p<0.0001); fewer scrub typhus cases were reported by 30 days than were typhoid cases.”
# 9th sentence, remove, not informative: “The patterns of time lag distributions….”

12. Discussion, 2nd paragraph, 5th sentence, edit”
# “Our results showed generally shorter time lags than…."

13. Discussion, 5th paragraph, remove, not informative
# “Other than clinical and epidemiological features…..”

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 declare that I have no competing interests.