Reviewer’s report

Title: The Quality of Indigenous Identification in Administrative Health Data in Western Australia: Insights from Studies Using Data Linkage

Version: 1  Date: 2 August 2012

Reviewer: Donna Mak

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
Nil

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Background, paragraph 6, sentence 1: delete the word 'which'.
2. Background, paragraph 9, sentence 3: I think there reference number should be '18' not '19', pls check
3. Methods, paragraph 1, sentence 1: Pls insert a reference for the PRISMA guidelines
4. Discussion paragraph 1, sentence 3: pls insert a space between '2006' and 'allocated'

Discretionary Revisions
1. The results section provides very comprehensive (sometimes overly comprehensive) descriptions/summaries of each of the studies included in the review and there is duplication between the information here and in table 3. I think the paper could be improved by shortening this section and referring readers to the information in Table 1.

2. It would be interesting for the authors to address the issue that whether Indigenous people identify themselves as Indigenous or non-Indigenous or do not answer the question is not necessarily based not on the perceived potential for stigmatisation/approbation (as implied in the paper's last sentence). There are other factors that may influence this, e.g. potential to advantage oneself, one's community or the broader Indigenous community by identifying as Indigenous; the perceived importance or relevance of correct Indigenous identification to the situation prompting that person’s contact with the organisation collecting the data, e.g. Indigenous identification may be perceived as being less important by a patient when they a presenting to emergency dept with a life-threatening illness c.f. when they present with a less-serious condition; whether the person is identifying their own Indigenous status or if it is done for them, e.g. children. Given that self-identification is one of the 3 components of the definition of an Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait islander Australian, is it realistic or appropriate to expect consistency of Indigenous identification of a particular individual in a variety of contexts at the same time, or in the same context and over their life
Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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