Reviewer's report

Title: Modeling Emergency Department Visit Patterns for Infectious Disease Complaints: Results and Application to Disease Surveillance.

Version: 1 Date: 26 November 2004

Reviewer: Karl Ekdahl

Reviewer's report:

General
This paper gives details on a model for emergency department (ED) visits to be used as a timely surveillance tools for unexpected events. The strength of the model (in its specific setting) is that it is based on a very long time series of historical data (1994 to 2002), which may of course hamper the immediate application of the model in other settings. With increasing focus on bioterror, the work is important as a good example of a timely surveillance system.

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

I do not have any major objections or comments to the article, more than that I find it too long. I believe that it could be shortened by at least 1/4, without compromising the content or the message.

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

The abbreviation ED should be spelled out the first time it is used in the manuscript.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.