Reviewer's report

**Title:** Measuring access to medicines: a review of quantitative methods used in household surveys

**Version:** 3  **Date:** 18 March 2010

**Reviewer:** Barbara Mintzes

**Reviewer's report:**

Most of the issues that I have raised have been dealt with well. The study report is much clearer and more readable. However, 3 key issues remain unaddressed. I am aware that to address these issues would have required re-opening the study itself, a step I believe was needed for a review of quantitative methods used in household surveys on medicines access.

1) lack of clarity about inclusion / exclusion criteria (the path from 9000 to 9 articles);

2) When reviewing quantitative methods used in household surveys, the need to include discussion not only of a subset of key elements of methodology, but also issues such as sampling frames and methods, instrument design etc (as listed in my previous comments). If you are calling for standardized methods, the implication is that these methods should be sufficiently rigorous to measure access systematically, and reasonably accurately. You have addressed some aspects of methodology very well, but I could not understand the decision to ignore others. Shifting from the word 'evaluates' to 'describes' is an inadequate strategy.

3) If you are calling for an international standardization of methods, it is inappropriate to virtually ignore the standardized methods used in a 71 country study. It would have been appropriate to critique the approach used, if it was inadequate, and to explain why you are calling for something different.

Minor suggestion:

If you do not believe the 85% cut-off point for response rate accurately reflects a 'low' versus a 'high' response rate, you should not use it as a cut-off. Taking off the words 'low' but reporting on numbers below and above implies it is a cut-off.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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.