Reviewer's report

Title: Estimation of the costs of cervical cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment in rural Shanxi Province, China: a micro-costing study

Version: 1 Date: 20 February 2012

Reviewer: Eduardo Lazcano-Ponce

Reviewer's report:

This is a costs study oriented to estimate direct medical and non medical cost of cervical cancer in a specific region in China. Despite is a study with local perspective; it has three strengths that are worth publishing in an international journal:

Use more precise estimations of costs. The micro-costing by itself is a hazardous methodology, takes more time; however, is very valuable in the cost-minimization analysis at health care providers’ level and in the cost-effectiveness analysis for decision-making.

Includes a societal perspective of costs. Know the costs from the societal perspective allows to estimate the magnitude of cost of interventions, no matters from the health care perspective, but also from the patients and their families, which often impact the implementation of a preventive program, in this particular case the screening program in cervical cancer in a rural area.

Local perspective. This paper shows an experience at local level. Most of the developing countries face the same situation, the screening programs implementation varies from one region to another, in fact within the same region. Presenting these results from a local level will enable decision makers to better allocation of resources to operate the program.

In general is a manuscript clear, fluent, well – written. The methodology is precise and widely explained, and the tables and figures well performed. I have three comments to the manuscript:

The flowchart could be more precise, are steps 4 and 6 parallel to the flow chart ?, perhaps it is better to change the sequence of steps.

To be more explicit, more easily to understand, that would be great to present a table comparing the local results from this study with the previous cost studies in cervical cancer China, detailed the author, the year of estimation, the methodology, the perspective, and unitary costs . This can highlight the strengths of the study and the information that this paper add.

The treatment cost varies according to the cancer stages that would be great if the authors explained about this source of variation of total costs.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.