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: 3 Date: 22 April 2012

Reviewer: Eric Suba

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Major Compulsory Revisions

The original version of this manuscript stated “Although most women do not have access to screening, a cervical cancer screening initiative has been established for rural women, involving visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA) and cytology. This initiative, which began in 2009, will eventually cover ~6% (10 million) of rural women aged 30-59 years in China.”

The revised version of this manuscript states “Although most women do not have access to screening, a cervical cancer screening initiative has been established for rural women. This initiative, which began in 2009, is planned to eventually cover ~8% (“10 million”) of rural women aged 35-59 years in China.”

In their response to reviewers, the authors state that “In relation to the “10-millon women” program, no report has yet been released, and the feasibility of cytology in this setting has yet to be demonstrated.”

If something happens, then it is feasible. The authors’ claim that the feasibility of cytologic screening in rural China has not yet been demonstrated is incorrect. Because China has started a screening program that will cover 8% of China’s rural population with cytology and VIA, it is apparent that cytologic screening is not only feasible in rural China but is in fact ongoing.

The authors should restore this part of the manuscript to its original version, which documents that China has started a large rural screening program based on cytology and VIA. The authors should acknowledge in their discussion that the absence of costs related to cytology is a significant limitation of the current study.

The revised manuscript states “After consulting with local key opinion leaders, cytology screening was not considered in the current study since it relies heavily on extensive quality assurance and is difficult to apply in rural areas in lower resource settings.

The authors should amend or remove this statement. Otherwise, the authors should explain why the perspectives of local key opinion leaders appear inconsistent with the perspectives of the Chinese opinion leaders who launched the “10-million women” program.”
Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests.