Reviewer's report

Title: Direct economic burden of hepatitis B virus related diseases: Evidences from Shandong, China

Version: 4 Date: 8 November 2012

Reviewer: Fujie Xu

Reviewer's report:

Compulsory changes
In the title or in the abstract, the authors should make it clear that the data were collected from “those who were admitted into a hospital for seven or more days”. For acute HBV infection, hospitalization for 7 or more days should be very rare and thus the economic data collected in this study are from "rare and severe" cases, and thus are biased data toward the high end of costs.

The authors should present data that are highly relevant for their study objective. If, as stated by the authors, the objective is “to inform health insurance policy reform” and assess “whether health insurance in China is adequate in terms of reducing the economic burden for those with chronic HBV”—why include those uninsured in table 2 and other tables? Obviously “increasing insurance coverage in China” is a totally different objective, and when the insured households have unbearable burdens, the burden for uninsured could only be higher. The 45 uninsured patients is a distraction and should not be included.

Again, if the objective is to assess economic burden and compared to annual household income levels, the per-admission data presented in Table 3—which is per admission, is not important.

The authors include too many data points in 10 tables. Please align your data with your objective and trim out the extraneous ones from text and the tables. There are still confusing statements and table titles, probably a language issue.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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.