Reviewer's report

Title: Adapting developing country methodology to improve the quality of health needs assessments

Version: Date: 26 November 2004

Reviewer: Scott Murray

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General
This is the first time that I have read of one of the rapid epidemiological assessment techniques as developed by WHO and other international agencies in resource poor countries, being applied in the urban UK context. Such techniques may be useful in the current UK context of community health partnerships, where health and social services are being encouraged to assess and meet needs collaboratively.

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

Nil

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

Background
With reference to the sentence beginning “The survey design must provide information” suggest that sentence should read “The survey design must provide information at local level and overcome unreliable population lists...... If local health care providers and communities can participate in data collection this has the potential advantage of facilitating the meeting of such needs in the local context in due course”.

Methods
The paragraph which begins “we collected most of the data in the evening” – I think should include “we collected most of the interview data in the evening”.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Could we add “in developed countries” at the end of the title?

Box 1: Add the word “service” before the final word coverage. An explanation of the considerable time to conduct each survey (over a year) might be useful.
What next?: Accept after minor essential 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 I have no competing interests.

Scott Murray