Reviewer's report

Title: Willingness to pay for social health insurance among informal sector workers in a major Chinese city: a contingent valuation study

Version: 1 Date: 5 March 2007

Reviewer: Weizhen Dong

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The article’s topic is quite interesting, since how to cover more people in China is a major concern for the Chinese government, and informal sector workers’ health care coverage is one of the major steps for achieving the goal. However, some key areas of the article are quite problematic.

1. The research uses ILO’s “informal workers” definition for the study, but does not classify different categories of the workers that are included in the sample, which includes employers who have 10 or less employees, self-employed professionals, temporary workers in formal/informal sectors, permanent workers in informal economy, and rural-urban migrants. Since the economic situation of those migrant workers, temporary workers and workers in informal sectors are much worse than those small scale entrepreneurs and self-employed professionals, and the former represents a much larger population than the latter, the study would make sense if it presented the responses of the different categories of the “informal workers”. The current report doesn't show the proportion of these categories of “informal workers” included in the sample. It makes the "conclusion" almost meaningless.

2. Some cities in China provide informal workers with BHI, as long as they are willing to pay the employer’s proportion of premium as well. Whether Wuhan city has this policy is unknown, but a discussion of this policy to be included in the paper would be helpful.

3. On page 20 (line 6 from the bottom), the authors state that the “central government policy stipulates that employers and employees contribute 8% of employees’ wages to the BHI system”. Is it a universal policy or locally decided? Because of the regional differences in economic development, different cities have different types of coverage; which is not discussed in the paper, even when the authors suggested “portable” health care insurance for migrants.

4. The authors state Wuhan city as “one of the largest cities in China”, which is not true. China has a number of cities have over 10 million residents, but Wuhan has less than 4 million. It is a typical medium sized city in China – which doesn’t undermine the importance of the study at all.

Based on the above concerns, especially the first two, I think the article’s quality is not publishable.

What next?: Reject because too small an advance to publish

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.