Reviewer's report

Title: Methods for dealing with discrepant records in linked population health datasets: a cross-sectional study

Version: 2 Date: 2 January 2007

Reviewer: Frank M Sullivan

Reviewer's report:

General
The topic is of increasing interest world-wide as greater use is made of routine databases. Better understanding of the limitations of health service data and methodological approaches to deal with the limitations are of interest to the readers of this BMC journal. The authors have made good use of their access to two datasets to study the rates of different types of hypertension in pregnancy and a range of variables known to be correlated to these.

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

The statement on page 4 ‘Alternative methods of reconciling inconsistent and discrepant reports from the two datasets were examined’ needs to be expanded as only one method, crosstabulation, is presented. Can they provide more information on the manual validation of these data as reported in ref 22? Did thy consider a capture/recapture technique? See Robles SC, Marrett LD, Clarke EA, Risch HA. An application of capture-recapture methods to the estimation of completeness of cancer registration. J Clin Epidemiol 1988;41:495-501.

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests