Reviewer's report

Title: Access to primary healthcare services for the Roma population in Serbia: a secondary data analysis.

Version: 1 Date: 21 March 2011

Reviewer: Kawika Liu

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
Yes, the question is well defined, namely whether the Roma are able to effectively access primary care in Serbia, and if not, the barriers that are preventing them from doing so.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
Yes, the methods are appropriate, in comparing three non-overlapping groups, which avoids errors which sometime occur with effective double counting in the inability to disaggregate for one or more groups. (The authors themselves highlight the difficulties posed by using three major data sources). The one potential confounder was the unavailability of data on efficacy, adherence and diagnostic accuracy in the three major data sets. There, the use of data from other studies, while perhaps unavoidable, makes the conclusions a bit more tenuous.

3. Are the data sound?
See the answer to question two above.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? yes.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes, although because discrimination is not well-discussed in the data analysis, it should be analyzed as an explicit determinant of health in order for the policy recommendations to be made as they were.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? The work effectively highlights its limitations, particularly in the use of self-identification for Roma identity, as well as the use of secondary data. Given the authors’ own statements, it may be useful in the future to examine non-Roma settlement living persons who identity as Roma.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes, the authors are explicit about basing their work on existing major Serbian policy makers and other reports on the Roma found within those sources.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes.

9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes.
* Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

Although the authors call attention to the role of factors other than those typically analysed, and address discrimination in their policy recommendations, discrimination as a determinant of health for the Roma does not seem to be adequately addressed. More attention could be made to how discrimination contributes to structural barriers to access to Roma.

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

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

**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.