Reviewer's report

Title: Burden, Trend and Challenges of Leprosy and other Skin Diseases in Malawi: Population-based Cross-sectional Study

Version: 2 Date: 7 May 2012

Reviewer: ANIL KUMAR

Reviewer's report:

Paper has a good subject for examination, highlighting severe under reporting of leprosy in Malawi national data (0.5 vs. 104) and thus may be accepted for publication after the following comments included in revised MS.

Major Comments:

1. It would be better if leprosy data only presented in this paper-not mixing with other skin ailments and accordingly title modified.

2. There appears a choice selection used in the recruitment process since people who pre-educated on the subjects came for physical examination and this group cannot be representative of population. Therefore, prevalence will get over estimated.

3. Can authors show that examined population is representative sample? If yes, then only one can assess levels /burden of leprosy prevalence. This is very important to show.

4. There is a paper (Kumar A, Girdhar BK. Is increasing MB ratio a positive indicator of declining leprosy? J Commun Dis 2006; 38(1):24-31) showing that high MB ratio in leprosy data is not a sign of positive impact but of severe under reporting (upto 75%) in passive data. In Malawi, it could be even more since MB rate is higher than in India about 50%.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

No competing interest