Reviewer's report

**Title:** Effect of the conditional cash transfer program Oportunidades on vaccination coverage for the Mexican elderly

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 13 March 2013

**Reviewer:** Robert Cumming

**Reviewer's report:**

**Major compulsory revisions**

1. This is a cross-sectional study evaluating an intervention so the issue of confounding is the main threat to validity. The authors have used propensity matching to try to control for confounding, which is reasonable. However, I would like to see more information in table 1 about SES and also something about health service utilisation. I am concerned (and surprised) that the intervention (Oportunidades) group had higher overall expenditure than the comparison group. Doesn't Oportunidades target poorer people? (The text on page 12, para 2 is the opposite of what is shown in Table 1.)

2. Information about attendance at 6 monthly medical check-ups should be included.

3. What was the response rate in the two groups? Page 9 Results does not give response rates and it should be there.

4. I am not sure why the authors used linear probability models instead of the more usual logistic regression or analogous methods for producing adjusted relative risks. The results (Table 2 and text) would be much easier to interpret if they were expressed in the usual metrics of risk difference and relative risk reduction, with 95% confidence intervals.

4. More information about Oportunidades is needed for those readers not familiar with the program. This should include information on how eligible older people are identified. I must admit that I had thought Oportunidades was only for families with young children.

**Minor essential revisions**

1. Do not use the acronym EP. In fact do not use "elderly people" at all. The accepted term these days is "older people".

2. Page 2, line 3. Does "most vulnerable groups" mean "vulnerable groups within the population of older people"?

3. Page 2, Results. Include relative risks and risk differences.

4. Page 3, paras 2 and 3. How many cases of tetanus were there in Mexico in
2008? How many influenza and pneumonia hospitalisations? ie include raw numbers, not just percentages and rates.

5. Page 4, para 2, penultimate sentence. I am sure there must be many countries (esp. in Africa) with influenza vaccination coverage less than 25% among older people.

6. Page 5, para 4. Not sure what is meant by "both datasets".

7. Page 11, para 2. I suspect that this is the first study of CCT for any kind of health intervention for older people, not just immunisation.

8. Table 1 should show percentages, not proportions.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no competing interests.