Reviewer's report

Title: Care Seeking Behaviour for Childhood Illness- A Questionnaire Survey in Western Nepal

Version: Date: 22 December 2005

Reviewer: anthony costello

Reviewer's report:

General

This is an an article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests. The paper reports the care-seeking behaviour of 292 Nepali mothers during childhood illness and determines the predictors of parents’ decision to seek care. The data is based upon structured interviews using a 14 day recall of morbidity and care- seeking. Although the findings of this study are not particularly surprising nor new (see ref 20), and might be considered more appropriate for a national rather than an international journal I think they are timely and important. There is increasing recognition that community child health programmes, especially the integrated management of childhood illness (IMCI) strategy has not had the major impact it was designed for. This paper highlights the scale to which poor families use informal rather than formal health services, and the factors which reduce the likelihood of poor mothers gaining access to allopathic services. It also highlights the relative lack of understanding by mothers about danger signs in childhood illness.

Generally the paper is well-written and comprehensively referenced. I support its publication but I feel the authors might need to address the following points prior to publication.

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

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

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. Kaski district has far better health indicators than most other districts in Nepal, and OPD attenders in Pokhara city may have a different profile from most rural populations.
2. The primary role of pharmacies in treatment might actually be considered as rational behaviour by mothers because pharmacies can provide over the counter antibiotics in the case of acute respiratory infection.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests