Reviewer’s report

Title: The burden of malaria to the poorest household is unjust but redeemable: Inequities in incidence, morbidity and expenditures on prevention and treatment in southeast Nigeria

Version: 2 Date: 3 December 2008

Reviewer: mark grabowsky

Reviewer’s report:

* Major Compulsory Revisions

None

* Minor Essential Revisions

1. There are a number of unusual uses of English that could easily be addressed with a careful editorial review.

2. The authors may wish to change the title to more accurately reflect the article. The article is descriptive rather than prescriptive. Therefore the first part of the title, "The burden of malaria to the poorest households is unjust but redeemable" seem inappropriate. The second part alone seems a more accurate description of the content: "Inequities in incidence, morbidity and expenditures on prevention and treatment in southeast Nigeria."

3. The author can be trusted to make these. For example, missing labels on figures, the wrong use of a term, spelling mistakes.

4. One of the principal values of doing a multivillage study is to make comparisons across villages as to outcomes. That is, for those outcome factors which differ, are there underlying differences in the population which provide explanatory clues. This type of analysis is missing from the paper. If such differences were found, it would provide a basis for interventions. The paper can be published without such analysis but it moves it farther away from being prescriptive.

* Discretionary Revisions

1. The data tables are generous in the amount of data and provides a full description of the study population. However, it lacks a clarifying principle of analysis. That is, how does it all fit together? It would be useful, for example, if the Table 1 demographic data and Table 2 incidence data were somehow related to the table 3 costing data. For example, are those who have higher transportation costs for malaria more likely to die from malaria? t may be that the sample size does not allow this extra analysis but it would be interesting and would likely support there underlying thesis.
2. It may be useful to provide some context for the low levels of malaria services for these populations. I suspect it is related to factors not presented in the paper. Large sums of money for malaria control are now slated for Nigeria. It would be useful to make a larger statement about how best to use these funds - based on the papers findings.

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

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

**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