Reviewer's report

**Title:** Barriers to the effective treatment and prevention of malaria in Africa: A systematic review of qualitative studies

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 18 March 2009

**Reviewer:** Myfanwy Morgan

**Reviewer's report:**

This paper focuses on an important issue of beliefs about malaria that may provide barriers to effective treatment and reports a synthesis of qualitative studies.

**Minor Essential Revisions**

1. The methods adopted are generally appropriate. However I was initially surprised to see that they used the CASP quality tool as the original version is quite lengthy and difficult to apply. I presume the 10 question version they cite contains the Items listed in Table 3 but am not clear how this information was used.

In the Results they just describe broad criteria of exclusion - essentially that studies were fatally flawed - which is fine but just a need for clarification of their approach.

2. In Figure 1 would be helpful to identify the reasons for exclusion (see for example paper by Mills E et al in J Clin Epidemiol 58 (2005)1081-88).

3. The data is well presented in Table 4 but the reported analysis is fairly basic. It would be useful to try and address some specific questions - such as have findings changed over time, are there differences between countries or populations? It would also be useful to try and take the analysis a step further - at present they are just identifying individual risk factors but is it possible to identify a more comprehensive explanation of beliefs/behaviours based on the original papers and to consider the different issues of preventive actions and uptake and adherence with treatment. This may help to reduce the decontextualisation and strengthen the Conclusions.

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

**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.