Reviewer's report

Title: Urban air pollution and emergency room admissions for respiratory symptoms: a case-crossover study in Palermo, Italy.

Version: 2 Date: 10 March 2011

Reviewer: Antonella Zanobetti

Reviewer's report:

The paper improved and the authors answered the comments raised. I only have few minor comments.

I appreciate that the authors tried the use of mean temperature, different lags and the splines, but why did they use a different model for different seasons?

In the results section, page 12, the authors should include the confidence intervals together with the risks (or percentage). This should be done also in other parts of the paper.

Page 12: The comment on the distributed lag and why they choose the lag 0, is not completely correct. First by looking at the figure, it is not true that the risks for each pollutant were unchanged at different lags, but they seem to decrease with lags or time. If they were unchanged, then the authors could have used another lag, instead of the lag 0. Therefore I suggest that the authors revise the last phrase, noting that the plots showed a more immediate effect that decreased over time or .... that mostly the same day exposure was significant and therefore will be considered ....

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests