Reviewer's report

Title: The Burden of Disease and Injury in the United States 1996

Version: 2 Date: 30 June 2006

Reviewer: Theo Vos

Reviewer's report:

General
Authors have responded well to criticism from first review.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
I would still prefer comparisons of rates rather than rankings as suggested in first review and would urge authors to reconsider

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
p2, line 10: '..adjustments...' validation of GBD DWs does not fit under this heading
p2, line 14: 'Detailed methods...etc' is a bland statement that is better deleted
p6, line 6: indicate that it was the first GBD study that developed stats for 8 (not 7?) large regions. Next sentence: One of these regions includes the US...
p7 bottom: same issue about term ‘adjustments’ as flagged in abstract
p8 last para: you temporarily switch from past to present tense
p8/9 section on Selection of population groups: you do not mention whether (and if so, how) you age-standardised the death and DALY rates for comparisons of these population groups. If not age-standardised, then you must do so.
p9 first line: '..showed..' is a rather strong word. At best, not finding variation over time in race reporting discrepancies is supportive evidence there may be no systematic bias rather than proof
p10, line 10: 15% cancer deaths with unknown primary is a lot; you need to give more detail than stating you gave careful consideration to these
p10, line 17: please add reference for statement doubting validity cross-national IHD comparisons
p12, second para: do you mean that ill-defined CVD deaths in other ethnic groups were eliminated from regression model?
p12, third para: this belongs under discussion, not methods
p13, top: did you use PTO1 and PTO2 as in GBD protocol or the revised PTO suggested by Eric Nord?
p14 second para: discussion not methods
p14 bottom: Australia was not first national BoD study (you probably meant out of the countries listed)
p15 first para: a non-sequitur. Comparison of rates more accurately describes the distribution of major causes of YLL than rankings would. I maintain rates are to be preferred as changes in ranking can be due to trivial or major differences in disease occurrence
p17, line 6: you promise four but list only 3 causes
p17, second para, line 4: young adult males or all males? and also why do you make the comparison with injuries?
p17 last line: ‘as’ not ‘than’
p18, lines 1 and 7: delete ‘young’
p19, line 11: ‘hypertension’ is a rather odd disease category (rather a risk factor); should you not have treated this as a ‘garbage code’? You seem to have defined a category hypertensive heart disease as separate from hypertension, which I would agree with.p22: why rankings and not rates (see remark above)?
p31: I wonder how achievable that goal of reducing disparities by 2010 is. Is there any evidence to support a move towards that goal?

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.