Reviewer's report

Title: Improved method for physician coded verbal autopsy reduces rate of discrepancy: Experience of Nouna Health and Demographic Surveillance System (NHDSS), Burkina Faso.

Version: 4 Date: 30 March 2011

Reviewer: Rasika Rampatige

Reviewer's report:

The question under investigation is clear, however authors seems to be using terms death certification and coding interchangeably. The term verbal autopsy also needs to be properly introduced and defined. Advantages and short comings of the VA methods should be discussed at the introduction and not in the discussion of the study. The discussion section should be more focussed on the study findings.

The methods used are well defined and sufficient details are available for replication.

Data are sound, however, authors should be aware of the bias imposed by using deaths from two separate years for the comparison. The reason for adopting this method needs to be explained.

The manuscript does adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.

However, the discussion should be more focussed on the study findings. Discussion on VA methods and its disadvantages can be included in the introduction

Abstract needs improvement, especially on opeing remarks on Verbal autopsy and also to reflect more on the study findings and conclusions

Writing needs to be improved and need more logical build up of arguments.

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interest