Reviewer’s report

Title: What is the global burden of visual impairment?

Version: 4 Date: 13 January 2006

Reviewer: Luciano Cerulli

Reviewer’s report:

General
The issue of presenting visual impairment is now well known, and the merit of this paper is that it highlights the effects of the problem at the global level. The methods used are appropriate in that they are similar to those used by the HWO itself to evaluate global data on best-corrected visual impairment. The literature citations are complete and well checked. The manuscript meets the MOOSE guidelines for meta-analyses, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria used are appropriate. The discussion and conclusions are adequately supported by the data. The paper could definitely be improved as far as language and style are concerned.

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
None

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
The language and style are heavy, awkward, and sometimes difficult to understand. Some examples are give below:
Syntax errors: e.g., page 6, line 12 “... any of the two visual acuity categories...” instead of “...either of the two...”
Odd or incorrect word choices: e.g., page 6, line 14, “Substantial mismatch between the numbers/percentages mentioned in the text ...” (Better: “Substantial discrepancy between the numbers/percentages mentioned in the text ...”)
Awkward or redundant wording: e.g., pag 6, line 20 “Participation rate in the survey not clear, i.e. the denominator number of eligible persons not mentioned to which the participants belonged, making it difficult to interpret the generalisability of the data.” (Better: “Uncertain generalisability of data due to unspecified participation rates, i.e., the size of the eligible population was not given.”)
Unnecessary repetition: e.g., page 7, line 8, where, immediately after specifying the objectives and inclusion criteria, the authors write: “Only nine population-based surveys from eight countries in seven GBD sub-regions met the inclusion criteria that enabled an assessment of the proportion of visual impairment due to refractive error in one or both of the visual impairment categories used by WHO [10][11][12][13][14][15][16][17][18][19]. (The phrase "that enable...by WHO" is totally unnecessary.)
The words best-corrected, meta-analysis, and population-based should always be hyphenated.

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests