Reviewer’s report

Title: Human papillomavirus prevalence amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian women prior to a national HPV vaccination program

Version: 1 Date: 9 April 2011

Reviewer: Mark Schiffman

Reviewer’s report:

Major: I understand that there are political and social reasons that one would want to conduct heightened surveillance of Indigenous populations. Agnostically, the data do not in my opinion show an important difference in prevalence patterns between the groups. If they had been labeled Group A vs. Group B, or Country 1 vs. Country 2, I would have said that there was no important difference that require separate consideration moving forward. The last sentence of the Abstract and the Conclusion are wrong in my view. I understand that the project was conceived to study inter-group differences, and the project is excellent, but the results are fundamentally null. The few subgroup findings by age and ethnicity could easily represent chance or fluctuations of little meaning to Public Health practice regarding HPV. Does length of presentation matter? This text, as it went on, struck me as a condensation of a government project report, with substantial repetition of figures and tables and text. It was good quality, just too long for the old days of journals. Perhaps that is not relevant but the article could be substantially shorter while preserving the major elements.

Minor: Poor nutrition has not been firmly linked to HPV prevalence.

I don’t see why Greenlandic Inuits are relevant to Indigenous people of Australia, please explain or delete.

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.