Reviewer’s report

Title: Hand sanitisers for reducing illness absences in primary school children in New Zealand: a cluster randomised controlled trial study protocol

Version: 1 Date: 29 December 2009

Reviewer: Nicole Le Saux

Reviewer’s report:

Re MS: 9673464553186947

1. Study design
Yes the study design is good. There is little risk of crossover between the groups and all investigators are blinded.

2. Sufficient details
Probably need more control group detail on the hand hygiene sessions, specifically if this will involve discussion on the background for hand washing. Will hand washing or hand rub and differences be explained? This will be important for reproducibility. Having the entire education module annexed would be great!

I think it would be important to use the hand rub upon entering the class room as this is the time that touching the nose or mouth will occur most commonly and pathogens acquired during the breaks will have colonized the hands of children.

Will the children be at liberty to use the sanitizers at any time they wish? There is more likelihood of success if sanatizers are used more frequently.

I think it is likely not necessary to determine length of illness since this will depend on individual factors rather than on the acquisition of infections.

3. Statistical analysis
I am not an expert on analysis but it appears to be adequate

4. Is writing acceptable
The writing is acceptable and is easy to understand.