Reviewer’s report

Title: Launching a salt substitute to reduce blood pressure at the population level: a cluster randomized stepped wedge trial in Peru

Version: 2 Date: 9 December 2013

Reviewer: Jacqui Webster

Reviewer’s report:

Discretionary revisions

Thanks for the opportunity to review this manuscript. In general I feel that the protocol is of good quality and the study design is sound. My main comment is that it might be helpful to have a brief discussion about the main elements of different salt reduction programs around the world in the background leading into an explanation of why you think these might not work in Peru and why you think a program to introduce a salt substitute is likely to be a more effective approach. Reference to the studies in China and Tibet which are currently just in the discussion would also be useful in the background/introduction.

It might also be useful to provide a bit more detail about the extent to which the salt substitute is likely to contribute to sodium intake and how this relates to blood pressure. At the moment it is not clear how, if at all, salt intake is going to be measured. It might be useful to explain this somewhere.

I have made a number of suggestions for edits/re-wording or additional clarification throughout the manuscript. I hope that these are useful.

Please feel free to contact me if anything is unclear.

Level of interest: An exceptional article

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I am Chief Investigator on two other projects on salt reduction funded through the Global Alliance for Chronic Disease Program

I am Director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Population Salt Reduction