Reviewer's report

Title: Lessons learned from a textbook outbreak: EHEC-O157:H7 infections associated with the consumption of raw meat products, June 2012, Limburg, Belgium.

Version: 1 Date: 20 June 2014

Reviewer: Goutam Adak

Reviewer's report:

The paper is clearly written and describes a well designed investigation into an important foodborne outbreak. I have one main criticism which should be relatively easy to respond to.

1. No data are given on the results of the hypothesis generation phase of the study. While it is stated that certain butchers were frequently mentioned during exploratory interviews, it would be useful to know how many exploratory interviews were completed and how many interviewees reported buying food from the stores and which foods were purchased. A listing of the hypotheses under test and frequency of exposure from exploratory interviews is required so that the reader knows why particular exposures were included and excluded from the case-control study questionnaire.

A second, less important point would be to:

2. Add information to Table 1 to show the data for exposures where significant associations were not found.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests as described above.