Reviewer's report

Title: Antibiotic sales in rural and urban pharmacies in northern Vietnam: an observational study

Version: 3  Date: 6 November 2013

Reviewer: Kathleen Holloway

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript is much improved.

Major compulsory revisions
Please ensure that all the references are written in full. Currently refs 1, 6, 7, 15, 19, 20, 25, 26, 30 are incomplete, either without year of publication or publisher. In particular, my previous review provided the complete reference for number 25 and this has not been used.

Ref 31 only refers to the situational in France, but the text in the discussion refers to the public education programs in Europe. The most suitable reference is the one that I provided before which describes public education campaigns in many countries - Huttner et al, Lancet Inf Dis.

I could not find the reason for not doing a focus group discussion written in the text of the methods - and it should be.

Minor essential revisions
Some grammatical corrections are needed, e.g. page 6, para 2, last sentence, insert "in" between participate" and "the study". Similarly on page 17, last para, first sentence, insert "to" between "injury" and "prevent infection". Page 19, para 2, insert a space between "settings" and "due".

Discretionary revisions
It would be helpful to know the number of patients as well as the sales per pharmacy per day in fig 1. In this way one would know if the profits from sale of herbal medicines and antibiotics were due to highly priced items or large numbers of patients.

It would be helpful to know the average unit price of the top 20 most commonly sold antibiotics in order that one may judge whether higher mark-ups were associated with higher unit prices or whether mark-ups for higher-priced medicines were lower. For example, the mark-up for Vietnamese produced products was often higher than for foreign-produced ones. Was this because the foreign-produced items were much more expensive?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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.