Reviewer’s report

Title: A priority health index identifies the top six priority risk factors for non-communicable diseases in Brazilian cities

Version: 3 Date: 11 March 2015

Reviewer: T. Alafia Samuels

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. While we recognize that this is a secondary analysis of existing data from VIGITEL, the limitations of the data from this surveillance system needs to be acknowledged in the discussion section
   a. “insufficient cholesterol screening” has not been identified as a risk factor
   b. Over-consumption of salt has not been identified as a risk factor despite its proven association with hypertension
   b. Line 92: low fruits and vegetables defined as <5 servings /week, while the WHO and PAHO define it as <5 servings / day

2. Although you may not have the data about management, the discussion should include a reference to


Where Brazil is one of the 23 countries included and this article concludes that “scaling up, above current coverage levels, a multidrug regimen for prevention of cardiovascular disease (a statin, aspirin, and two blood-pressure-lowering medicines)…in those already accessing health services… could effectively meet three-quarters of the proposed global goal… of reducing chronic disease death rates by an additional 2% per year”

So that certainly one risk factor for NCDs deaths is sub-optimal treatment of diagnosed disease. Addressing this deficiency would lead to the largest improvement in NCD mortality

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Line 43: diagnosed hypercholesterolemia

2. Line 93: Replace the word “doses” with standard alcoholic drinks or similar wording

Discretionary Revisions

1. Was colon cancer and the need for colonoscopy screening addressed?
2. Line 112: Did you use only the underlying cause of death? Did you consider contributory risk in assigning cause of death?
3. Line 142 – Why only English literature?
4. Will you be making recommendations to the “Saude Nao tem Preco” from these results? Specifically, to include generic statins for hypercholesterolemia in their programme of free medication?

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests