**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** A cost-effectiveness analysis of three components of a syndromic surveillance system for the early warning of epidemics in rural China

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 01 Sep 2015

**Reviewer:** Jorida Shahinas

**Reviewer's report:**

I have been reading this paper with great interests. There are actually very few studies estimating cost-effectiveness of infectious disease surveillance system. The authors have narrowed their research subject and this study aims to calculate the cost-effectiveness of a Syndromic Surveillance System (SSS) which was part of the Integrated Surveillance System in rural China (ISSC project). However authors focused on the costs analysis and failed to evaluate properly the effectiveness of this SSS.

A prerequisite of a cost-effectiveness study is the availability of well documented studies on the health outcomes and the reason this kind of studies are very rare is that this data are generally missing. Consider the possibility of obtaining epidemiological data, on health outcomes such as cases and deaths. Specify why it I not possible to obtain epidemiological data on the diseases outbreaks for the time period considered.

When performing a cost-effectiveness analysis we want to make a choice between one or more alternatives in other words we want to select the best value for the many spend comparing different surveillance systems. There is no evidence in this study for an alternative system that can be useful to make such choices. Since this SSS was added to the pervious national surveillance system, authors can consider performing a proper effectiveness analysis (this depends on the availability of epidemiological data) considering the disease outbreaks at regional level before and after the implementation of the SSS.

If authors focus is the cost analysis and since it is indeed a valid study I feel to suggest the authors consider another Journal for example BMC Health Services Research.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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Unable to assess

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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Not relevant to this manuscript

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