**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Associations between national viral hepatitis policies/programmes and country-level socioeconomic factors: a sub-analysis of data from the 2013 WHO viral hepatitis policy report

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 30 Mar 2017

**Reviewer:** Jack Wallace

**Reviewer's report:**

**General comments**

This manuscript provides data on an important topic and is well presented and written. An underlying concern for this reviewer throughout the study relates to the lack of recognition of the regional differences that could affect the capacity, skill, available resources and willingness of countries to develop policies or programs to respond to the issues raised by viral hepatitis, and I'm not sure why viral hepatitis prevalence was not one of the factors investigated as an association with the development of national policies. The issue of funding and resources available is only briefly mentioned, but I would have assumed that would be an issue of importance, particularly given the association between low/middle income countries and a greater prevalence.

**Specific comments (and my apologies, but there was no page numbering in the version that I could access)**

**Methods**

* It could be clarified that the data is based on the WHO Focal points who completed the survey, rather than the reader assuming that all WHO focal points responded to the survey.

**Introduction:**

* The regional variations in viral hepatitis are significant, and will impact on the capacity of countries to develop policies/programmes.

* Line 20 - reference 6 is not the best reference to use for a clinically-related issue, which is usually expressed more confidently.
* Line 43 - the comment "it is important to ask whether there are context-specific factors", sets up an expectation that this study will respond to all of these "context specific factors", which it can't and doesn't.

Discussion

* Line 41 - the methodology used in this study can only determine the existence, not the effectiveness of the health policy making

* Line 46 - "existence of some key national policies…"; there is an assumption inherent in this statement that there are several types of national policies and which leads to a need to identify what makes a policy "key"?

* 2nd page of the discussion, line 9 - 18: I found this paragraph a little unclear; I was not sure what is meant by a "societal infrastructure" issue or the sentence about financial support

* Line 20 - the issue of low-socioeconomic status country having the greatest hepatitis prevalence should be included in the background

* Line 30 - 40 - the final paragraph of the discussion needs revision, with a lead in sentence to frame the relevance of information included in the rest of the paragraph with the overall study. The sentence supporting the WHO strategy, even with its "clarity and precision" is based on opinion, and while largely supported there are other perspectives. Further information is required to identify the relevance of the ELPA document to the findings of the rest of the study and any of the findings, particularly with its focus on Europe.

Limitations:

* The lack of reference to the viral hepatitis prevalence within the specific country and the development of a policy/program response to viral hepatitis is fundamental

* The quantitative nature of the study means that there is no interrogation of the quality of the national responses.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**

If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

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

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I recommend additional statistical review

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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