Reviewer's report

Title: Controversial Ebola Vaccine Trials in Ghana: A thematic analysis of critiques and rebuttals in digital news

Version: 1 Date: 19 Mar 2017

Reviewer: Isaac Chun-Hai Fung

Reviewer's report:

Summary: This paper presents an analysis that is largely qualitative and descriptive. The authors analyzed the narratives of 139 online news articles that carried the keywords "Ebola" and "Vaccination" and were relevant to the specific controversy associated with the proposed Ebola vaccine trials in Ghana.

This paper provided a detailed description and explanation to the background, and the development of the controversy and its implications to future vaccine trials of Ebola or other similar diseases.

I especially appreciate the visualization of the data in the figures. The figures were well designed to present the data well.

Minor comment:

In the flow chart (Figure 1). The "n" in the first box refers to the number of newspapers (n=9), while "n" in the rest of the flow charts refers to the number of news articles. I suggest that you either use a different color for the first box, or remove the arrows from the first box to the second box. Because for the current version of the figure, it took the reader a second to figure out why n=9 would suddenly become n=27460.
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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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

Acceptable

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