**Reviewer's report**

**Title:** The challenge of maintaining microscopist capacity at basic levels for malaria elimination in Jiangsu Province, China

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 25 Oct 2017

**Reviewer:** David Larsen

**Reviewer's report:**

The article "The challenge of maintaining microscopist capacity at basic levels for malaria elimination in Jiangsu Province, China" presents an interesting analysis of microscopy diagnosis for malaria in China which is pursuing malaria elimination. The ability to maintain high quality diagnostics is important, given the levels of imported malaria that are being reported.

**Major comments**

1. I suggest the authors follow the STROBE guidelines for reporting an observational epidemiological study. These guidelines would help the authors organize the manuscript better - right now it's a bit difficult to understand what exactly the authors are doing.

2. The authors need to include better description of their sampling plan. It appears that they randomly selected one microscopist or clinician from each county CDC and hospital. They also take one microscopist or clinician from half of the township hospitals. Were half the hospitals selected randomly, or by convenience?

3. Can the authors explain better whether they took slides from the microscopist or clinician's case load, or whether they had a pack of "training" slides that they used to assess the microscopist or clinician's expertise? It appears they may have done both, but this section was confusing to read. Following the STROBE guidelines will help to clarify what was done and why.

4. There is no mention of sensitivity or specificity of the individuals surveyed. My opinion is that these would be the primary outcomes when assessing accuracy of the microscopists or clinicians.
5. The ANOVA does not appear to be the appropriate statistical test for the problem presented in the manuscript. I would suggest using a logistic regression.

6. The authors report an increasing trend in imported cases. How is this determined? Could the authors explain more in the introduction or methods how imported cases are determined (my guess is by travel history)?

Minor comments

7. Lines 147-157 belong more in the introduction.

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

No

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

Yes

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

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I am able to assess the statistics

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