Reviewer’s report

Title: Economic consequences of Japanese schools’ recovery certificate policy for seasonal influenza

Version: 1 Date: 02 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Clemence Tarirai

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the manuscript: Economic burden for "Recovery Certificate" from seasonal influenza in Japan.

My comments are:

1. The value of the Japanese "recovery certificate" has been questioned in a number of writing (some quoted by the author), hence it's not new information. However, the author attempted a different and interesting approach by looking at the negative economic impact posed by the requirement to provide a "recovery certificate" in order for school-going children <15 years old to come back to class.

2. The manuscript's theme is narrow and specific to the Japanese economics policy-makers audience, hence it would be appropriate for publication in a local (Japanese) medical, economics or labor journal once revised.

3. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are ill-defined. The methods described are for a specific set of population groups (i.e. school-going patients less than 15 years old, their caregivers and healthcare providers), whereas the title is too general for the Japanese population. Hence, the title (aim) and the methods are partially disconnected.

4. The descriptions of the methods (and maths) for estimation of the variables studied e.g. sample size for different target groups are not clear (lines 121-125, 159-160). Perhaps, the author should provide properly explained mathematical expressions/equations for defining and assessing the parameters studied while clearly stating the assumptions made or providing references for excluding possible confounding variables.

5. There is a disconnect between the methods and the data presentation. One example is the use of different age group categories in the methods compared with those in the results, <5 years old vs. <6 years old. The statistical data analyses is mentioned, but it is unclear what was being analyzed e.g. dependent, independent, indifference, and confounding variables, and their link to the outcome (cost burden)?
6. The manuscript is laden with grammatical, contextual and punctuation errors e.g. Background section: bold lines 42, 44, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52-59 (context?), 62, 79, 181 (chapter?), 204 and the rest of the manuscript. It requires major English language editing.

7. The manuscript was written by a single author, but the author refers to oneself as 'we' throughout the articles: bold lines 81, 89, 90, 104-105, 111, 113, 118, 129, 131, 136, 138, 141, 145, 147, 155, 158, 161, 204, 205, etc.

8. The author makes speculative statements (might?, seems?) in the Results and Conclusions with definitive reference to the findings to support the arguments e.g. the statement in bold line numbers 30-31 in the abstract and conclusion, lines 69-70.

9. The author makes inaccurate comparisons in lines 181-183 and 208-210. For instance, are total costs (burden) values reported over the period 2013-2018 or are average annual costs (burden) reported for the the period 2013-2018? (the latter can be meaningfully compared with data for 2015).

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.

No

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

No

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 am able to assess the statistics

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

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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