Reviewer's report

Title: Effect of vaginal self-sampling on cervical cancer screening rates: a community-based study in Newfoundland.

Version: 4 Date: 20 February 2015

Reviewer: Silvia Minozzi

Reviewer's report:


1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? It is not clear (not described) where, how and how often the educational campaign in community A and B were implemented. Moreover, it should be described in detail what was the “Regular provincial education” implemented in community C and in what was different or similar to the educational campaign realized in communities A and B. In the analysis comparing the results of the three communities potential confounding factors (i.e. level of education, marital status, previous adherence to screening programs, adherence to other screening programs (i.e. breast cancer screening through mammography) are not accounted for using appropriate statistical analysis (i.e. regression analysis)

3. Are the data sound?

4. Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation? No, it is not clear why demographic characteristics are not reported in table 3 for community C They should be reported

5. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? yes

6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? yes

7. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? yes

8. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? yes

9. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes for title. In the abstracts also results of group C (no intervention) and of the comparison between A and C should be reported

10. Is the writing acceptable? Yes

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)
Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. In the abstracts also results of group C (no intervention) and of the comparison between A and C should be reported.

2. It is not clear (not described) where, how and how often the educational campaign in community A and B were implemented. Moreover it should be described in detail what was the “Regular provincial education” implemented in community C and in what was different or similar to the educational campaign realized in communities A and B.

3. It is not clear why demographic characteristics are not reported in table 3 for community C. They should be reported.

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

4. In the analysis comparing the results of the three communities potential confounding factors (i.e. level of education, marital status, previous adherence to screening programs, adherence to other screening programs (i.e. breast cancer screening through mammography) are not accounted for using appropriate statistical analysis (i.e. regression analysis).

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests