Reviewer's report

Title: National disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) for 257 diseases and injuries in Ethiopia, 1990-2015: findings from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2015

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Reviewer: Peter Byass

Reviewer's report:

Overall this is a reasonably competent description of the burden of diseases and injuries in Ethiopia using GBD 2013 estimates. There are some minor points that need tidying up before it can be accepted for publication.

In several places in the Abstract, the phrase "GBD 2013 data" is used, which is misleading. It should be "GBD 2013 estimates" - i.e. the outputs of the GBD 2013 modelling process in relation to Ethiopia, not primary data.

The basic methods used are those already used for the worldwide GBD 2013 exercise, which are generally satisfactory. Unfortunately, as with much GBD work, the globally recognised International Classification of Diseases (ICD) coding system is not used to characterise disease entities, and this is a weakness of the paper, making direct comparisons with other material difficult.

Here the GBD 2013 estimates for Ethiopia are taken in isolation, but there is no discussion of possible problems associated with this approach. GBD methods in principle "borrow" characteristics of adjoining territories where in-country data are scarce, and this is a potential concern for Ethiopia, which happens to be surrounded by a number of territories with poorly-performing health systems. Is it possible to quantify - or exclude - any such effects? Is it possible to re-run the GBD 2013 model for Ethiopia only (i.e. using only in-country source data)?

Figure 4 should say "Alzheimer's" and not "Alzheimer" (and line 163)

Figure 5 "standardized" is mis-spelt. The legend to figure 5 is unclear - what are the numbers on the left-hand side?

What is the meaning of the footnotes to Figs 4 and 5 about excluding HIV/AIDS, and why?
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