Reviewer's report

Title: The burden of pertussis in low and middle-income countries since the inception of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) in 1974: a systematic review protocol

Version: 2
Date: 12 March 2015
Reviewer: Chukwueemeka Nwachukwu

Reviewer's report:

General:
This review is important because it will show gaps in data availability of data or otherwise on the epidemiology of pertussis in LMIC. There may be silent resurgences which go largely unnoticed and is increasing the prevalence of childhood mortality.

Major Compulsory Revisions:
Types of Studies:
The systematic review will include "cross sectional, cohort and surveillance studies". The authors will need to provide more information on how these different types of studies will be managed especially in quality assessment, risk of bias and analysis. Are there methods to assess their qualities as separate study type as well as analysis or will they be pooled and assessed with same criteria and standards?

Data Synthesis, paragraph 1 - Authors should provide more details on methods of analysis and how different types of data will be dealt with. Some of the secondary outcomes cannot be reported as "incidences and/or prevalence". How will other continuous or categorical data be analyzed? It may be necessary to provide information on how the authors intend to deal with the limitations in determining incidence/prevalence from cohort studies.

Data Synthesis, paragraph 3 - Sub-group analysis will be done based on the income level of the countries as low, lower and upper middle income countries. Please provide a specific criteria for placing countries in each of the categories or a citation to point readers to the source where this classification is defined.

Minor Essential Revisions:

Discretionary Revisions:
Data Synthesis, paragraph 3 - Authors may consider a sub-group analysis to include hospital based vrs population based survey as pooling results from both populations may mask the differentials in incidence/prevalence usually experienced from these research populations.
It may be necessary to consider sensitivity analysis especially around the quality of include studies.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interest.