Reviewer’s report

Title: Prioritising the development of severity distributions in Burden of Disease studies for countries in the European region

Version: 0 Date: 11 Dec 2019

Reviewer: Astrid Cornez

Reviewer's report:

Overall I found this commentary very useful and interesting.

I found it relevant to highlight the bias induced by the use of standard severity distribution in the calculation of YLDs at the national level, particularly when it comes to comparing different populations, and in particular to interpret the extent of disability in the most deprived populations, with the risk of increasing socio-economic inequalities if these estimates are used in public health policies. You provide answers to essential questions that any researcher leading a national burden of disease study must ask himself. Finally, you propose a concrete approach to guide action priorities in the development of severity distribution at the national level.

74: I would have briefly explained what this composite approach consists of, and added a reference (if this approach has already been used in another country).

82: it is interesting to mention the possibility of redefining the severity distribution without asymptomatic cases when the available data only include symptomatic cases, and to highlight the importance of remaining consistent in the choices and definition of health states.

94: Even if it is another component, I would have mentioned somewhere the existence of a potential bias induced by the use of the same disability weights, subject to variations in interpretation according to context, values and cultural differences.

Level of interest

Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English

Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable
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