Reviewer's report

Title: Using Funnel Plots in Public Health Surveillance

Version: 2 Date: 20 August 2011

Reviewer: Tanja Srebotnjak

Reviewer's report:

I have reviewed the revised manuscript (revision 1).

I have 2 minor comments:

(1) The authors changed the wording from "marginally significant" to "close to significant". In my view there is no difference between these two phrases because - as the reviewer had pointed out - it depends on the choice of significance level. Instead, I would say that "at a significance level alpha=0.05, the results were not statistically significant" or choose a different alpha, e.g., 0.1

(2) I believe that the commonly used term for conclusions about the nature of a relationship or individual characteristic are drawn at the aggregate level is "ecological fallacy" and is mainly observed in "ecological studies". I therefore suggest changing the terminology from "ecologic" to "ecological".

I have no further requests for revision.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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