

Peer Review Report

Review Report on Trends in COVID-related activity in sentinel family medicine practices: An observational study

Original Article, Int J Public Health

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

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EVALUATION

Q 1 Please summarize the main findings of the study.

The authors present their experience recruiting, implementing and maintaining a network of internists and pediatricians for the monitoring of COVID-related consultations in primary care in a Swiss canton.

Q 2 Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

Strengths of the manuscript include a thorough documentation of the rationale for the network and many elements of implementation. Limitations include a vague title and abstract, which didn't give me a clear sense of what the manuscript contained, and in my opinion an incomplete assessment of the potential of this approach.

Q 3 Please provide your detailed review report to the authors. The editors prefer to receive your review structured in major and minor comments. Please consider in your review the methods (statistical methods valid and correctly applied (e.g. sample size, choice of test), is the study replicable based on the method description?), results, data interpretation and references. If there are any objective errors, or if the conclusions are not supported, you should detail your concerns.

Abstract: the abstract results do not give a clear sense of either how successful implementation was (would include that 37 physicians of the initial aim of 50 collected data), nor the volume of information collected (901 practice-weeks in family medicine and 604 in pediatrics), nor quantitative data to support the declaration. I would shorten the conclusions to allow more space for results.

Introduction: Are the authors aware of similar initiatives in other Cantons or countries? The context and rationale are described very clearly, but little about whether the description of this experience fills a gap in the literature or adds to other reports.

Methods:

- The authors use 'ad hoc', which I believe means 'as needed'. How was the network 'as needed'?
- In Population, they say the physicians were 'medical practice' specialists'?
- Is it possible to tell us the level of financial compensation?
- The results seem to reflect weekly totals? Were these the sum of daily questionnaires?

Results:

- Figures - please provide definitions in the figures. It's not immediately clear what "Total covid outside suspicions" means
- Figures 2 and 3 look the same? Please explain to me how they're different?
- In the figure, if I understand, the peak was that over half of all patient contacts were about COVID in family medicine (week 16-17)? Maybe highlight this point?
- What does the phrase mean "SARS-CoV-2 vaccination was observed in family medicine until the summer."?

Discussion:

- The first paragraph of the discussion is a bit difficult to follow. Maybe focus on 2 or 3 primary conclusions?
- Did other cantons or countries try something similar?
- Under what conditions do you think you could have successfully recruited 50 GPs? Or had a more representative sample?

- It seems that the sentinel system was unable to provide an accurate perception of Covid prevalence because most covid testing didn't occur there, unlike for influenza. Is that correct? Is the federal Sentinella system playing that role?
- The statistical analysis talks about results per 1'000 contacts. How do the covid results compare to a typical flu season? A greater or lower proportion?

PLEASE COMMENT

Q 4 Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

I would prefer something like "Trends in COVID-related activity in sentinel family medicine practices: an observational study"

Q 5 Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes

Q 6 Is the English language of sufficient quality?

Yes

Q 7 Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

Yes.

Q 8 Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?)

Yes

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Q 9 Originality



Q 10 Rigor



Q 11 Significance to the field



Q 12 Interest to a general audience



Q 13 Quality of the writing



Q 14 Overall scientific quality of the study



REVISION LEVEL

Q 15 Please make a recommendation based on your comments:

Major revisions.