Costs of primary healthcare presentations and hospital admissions for scabies and related skin infections in Fiji, 2018-2019 – Cover letter

8 June 2024

The Editorial Board,

PLOS Global Public Health

We would appreciate your consideration of the above manuscript for publication in *PLOS Global Public Health*. Our paper provides evidence on the healthcare costs of scabies and bacterial skin and soft tissue infections (SSTIs) in Fiji.

Scabies and related SSTIs like impetigo are highly prevalent in many low- and middle-income settings, as well as among disadvantaged populations in high-income settings.[1] It therefore has economic implications for patients affected by the disease and the healthcare system of these countries. However, there very limited data on the economic burden of these diseases. Data on the healthcare costs of scabies and related SSTIs can highlight the extent of economic burden and serve as key inputs in assessing the overall cost-effectiveness of scabies interventions, especially preventive programs.

Our aim in this study was to estimate the annual healthcare costs of scabies and related SSTIs at the national level in Fiji. We use rich surveillance data on surveillance for scabies and related SSTIs in Fiji, a country where over 20% of individuals have scabies or impetigo.[2] We find a very high estimated healthcare costs because scabies and related SSTIs, equivalent to 2.4% of the government’s revenues allocated to health. Our findings are also relevant to other Pacific Island countries, where the burden of scabies and the costs of treatment may be similar to that of Fiji.[3]

Given that your journal focuses on addressing global health inequities, and that scabies-related diseases occur among disadvantaged populations, we view PLOS *Global Public Health* as the ideal journal to publish our research. Our work has not been submitted elsewhere and there are no prior publications with overlapping information. All authors have approved the manuscript as submitted and declare no conflicts of interest.

Thank you for considering this manuscript for publication.

Yours sincerely,

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**References**

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