**Vijaykumar Raamkumar: Zika communications issues**

Review Comments:

We’ve reviewed your draft internally and also obtained comments from two external reviewers. We have the following suggestions for revision.

**Surveillance:** You need to give some details – in brief -- on the surveillance programme for infectious diseases including zika and dengue:  the national agency conducting surveillance, who it reports to, what surveillance consists of, how samples are collected, tested and confirmed, how cases are followed up to trace the source of infection, what follow-up consists of. Are samples to be delinked and anonymised? I understand that the fourth case was picked up not by the national surveillance system but by a separate project on fevers which sent the sample to the NIV for testing.   You need to mention the requirements of the IHR. You need to describe what the IDSP is supposed to be doing.

What type of surveillance programme was this? Was this a malaria surveillance system where the opportunity was taken to test for zika in addition to malaria or was this a new system where people were told (or were left believing) it was for malaria but was in fact for zika? (In fact the first three cases came from samples collected as part of the national surveillance programme and the fourth from a survey on fevers.)

There is no discussion of surveillance for zika through the analysis of previously collected blood samples (perhaps as part of routine malaria surveillance). There are rumours that zika may have been present in India for many years (perhaps mistaken for dengue and/or malaria). Why has no study been done in India looking at such samples (if they exist)? This might be a further point for the authors to critique the lack of action.

**Communication:**What arenational / international guidelines /regulations on communication related to surveillance? Are people to be told when their samples are collected? What does the national risk communication plan say -- about whether people should be told when their samples are collected for zika, about intergovernmental communication, public communication? What do you think of it as a framework? What do the International Health Regulations say on notifying the WHO, and did the government follow these regulations?

You have shown that the government did not make use of twitter to communicate zika related information to the public.  You have not explained why this is important. What is government’s main medium of communication to the public, particularly in health?  How much emphasis does it put / money does it spend on traditional media?

You need to explain what the 2013 study findings (which media are used by the public for health info) mean for government communication (media used by the government to inform the public).  Second, it is not clear why such detail is given for the purposes of your comment here.  Papers reporting on statistics are sent to our stats reviewer for checking.

The link between these two sections needs to be clear.

Please try and keep the number of references down to those necessary to make your point.

We’ve marked some comments in this document which I hope you will find useful.

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