Decision Letter (JCQ-2025-0008)

From: jcqeic@gleampub.com

To: horitano@yokohama-cu.ac.jp

CC: e213065g@yokohama-cu.ac.jp

BCC:

Subject: Journal of Clinical Question - Decision on Manuscript ID JCQ-2025-0008

Body: 17-May-2025

Dear Dr Horita:

Manuscript ID JCQ-2025-0008 entitled "Resurgence of death from respiratory infections after COVID-19 pandemic" which you submitted to the Journal of Clinical Question, has been reviewed. The comments of the reviewer(s) are included at the bottom of this letter.

The reviewer(s) have recommended publication, but also suggest some revisions to your manuscript. Therefore, I invite you to respond to the reviewer(s)' comments and revise your manuscript.

To submit your revised manuscript, follow the below steps.
1. Access to https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jcq and log into the site.
2. Click "Author" at the top left of the screen at "Home" page.
3. Click "Manuscripts with Decisions" on Author Dashboard page.
4. Click "create a revision" on the manuscript you are going to revise.
5. The system creates your revision manuscript form. Provide your comments about the revised points at the response field, fill in on each field step by step as same as you did for the original submission, and submit your revised manuscript.
IMPORTANT: Your original files are available to you when you upload your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before completing the submission.
Your manuscript number has been appended to denote a revision.

You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of the manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer. Please also highlight the changes to your manuscript within the document by using the track changes mode in MS Word or by using bold or colored text.

Once the revised manuscript is prepared, you can upload it and submit it through your Author Center.

When submitting your revised manuscript, you will be able to respond to the comments made by the reviewer(s) in the space provided. You can use this space to document any changes you make to the original manuscript. In order to expedite the processing of the revised manuscript, please be as specific as possible in your response to the reviewer(s).

IMPORTANT: Your original files are available to you when you upload your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before completing the submission.

Because we are trying to facilitate timely publication of manuscripts submitted to the Journal of Clinical Question, your revised manuscript should be uploaded as soon as possible. If it is not possible for you to submit your revision in a reasonable amount of time, we may have to consider your paper as a new submission.

Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to the Journal of Clinical Question and I look forward to receiving your revision.

Sincerely,
Professor Richard Isaacs
Editor in Chief, Journal of Clinical Question
jcqeic@gleampub.com

[Editor's Comments]
Associate Editor
Comments to the Author:
(There are no comments.)

[Reviewer(s)' Comments]
Reviewer: 1

Comments to the Author
1.The topic is novel, and it is best to refine the idea and add some information about the results. For example, it can be classified by month, age and gender, and the results are a little simple.
2.The statistical treatment method in the method part needs to be supplemented
3.Supplementary references, the literature is a little less convincing

Reviewer: 2

Comments to the Author
This manuscript presents a timely and well-organized observational study that examines national mortality trends related to influenza and invasive pneumococcal disease in Japan across the pre-pandemic, pandemic, and post-pandemic periods. Utilizing data from Japan’s official e-Stat database, the study identifies a marked resurgence in respiratory-related deaths following the relaxation of COVID-19-related public health measures. The findings address a critical gap in nationwide epidemiological surveillance and offer important clinical and public health insights.

Comment 1:
The use of the Mann-Whitney U test is appropriate for comparing non-parametric data across periods. However, the authors should clarify whether seasonal patterns and year-to-year variations were accounted for or evaluated through sensitivity analyses. Additionally, including confidence intervals or effect sizes alongside p-values would provide a more robust statistical interpretation.

Comment 2:
The discussion offers plausible explanations for the observed increase in post-pandemic mortality. Nonetheless, the authors should more explicitly acknowledge that causal relationships cannot be inferred due to the ecological design of the study. Further consideration of potential confounders—such as vaccination coverage, emergence of viral variants, and changes in healthcare access—would strengthen the discussion.

Comment 3:
Minor grammatical and stylistic issues are present throughout the manuscript (e.g., “The object of this study” should be revised to “The objective of this study”). A thorough language review is recommended to enhance clarity and readability.

Date Sent: 17-May-2025

Print Close Window

Author's Response to Decision Letter for (JCQ-2025-0008)

Resurgence of death from respiratory infections after COVID-19 pandemic

Comments to the Author
1.The topic is novel, and it is best to refine the idea and add some information about the results. For example, it can be classified by month, age and gender, and the results are a little simple.
Thank you for your feedback. Although we understand your concern, age- and gender-specific mortality data for influenza and invasive pneumococcal disease are not publicly available from the national e-Stat database we used
2.The statistical treatment method in the method part needs to be supplemented
We appreciate this suggestion. The Methods section has been revised to include a detailed description of the statistical analysis.
3.Supplementary references, the literature is a little less convincing
Thank you for this important point. We have added Postpandemic immunity debt of influenza in the USA and England: an interrupted time series study (Leung et al, Public health 2024) to improve the grounding of our interpretations.

Reviewer: 2

Comments to the Author
This manuscript presents a timely and well-organized observational study that examines national mortality trends related to influenza and invasive pneumococcal disease in Japan across the pre-pandemic, pandemic, and post-pandemic periods. Utilizing data from Japan's official e-Stat database, the study identifies a marked resurgence in respiratory-related deaths following the relaxation of COVID-19-related public health measures. The findings address a critical gap in nationwide epidemiological surveillance and offer important clinical and public health insights.

Comment 1:
The use of the Mann-Whitney U test is appropriate for comparing non-parametric data across periods. However, the authors should clarify whether seasonal patterns and year-to-year variations were accounted for or evaluated through sensitivity analyses. Additionally, including confidence intervals or effect sizes alongside p-values would provide a more robust statistical interpretation.
Thank you for this comment. We added a multivariable linear regression analysis (Table 1) to address potential seasonal patterns and year-to-year variations.

Comment 2:
The discussion offers plausible explanations for the observed increase in post-pandemic mortality. Nonetheless, the authors should more explicitly acknowledge that causal relationships cannot be inferred due to the ecological design of the study. Further consideration of potential confounders—such as vaccination coverage, emergence of viral variants, and changes in healthcare access—would strengthen the discussion.

We understand your concern and we have revised the discussion to more clearly acknowledge the limitation of causal inference due to the ecological design. In addition, we have addressed changes in healthcare access as a potential confounder and clarified the wording.

Comment 3:
Minor grammatical and stylistic issues are present throughout the manuscript (e.g., "The object of this study" should be revised to "The objective of this study"). A thorough language review is recommended to enhance clarity and readability
.
Thank you for pointing this out. We have carefully proofread and revised the manuscript for grammatical accuracy and improved clarity.

Print Close Window