

Review of “A preliminary evaluation....” By W. Zhang et al.

This paper is basically OK but minor to moderate revision is needed. The paper concentrates too much only on a specific evaluation of particular precursor claims. It would be useful to put this in a more general context of the long and unsuccessful history of quake prediction research (see Kagan, 1997, and Geller, 1997, both in the Dec. 1997 issue of GJI).

Also, it would be useful for the authors to try to outline a protocol for hypothesis testing of surface latent heat flow claims going forward, as a guide for future work in this field.

In lines 108 to 109 the authors define 00, 01, etc. This should be moved to a separate table, to make it easier for readers to find.

The discussion in lines 242-244 of the “68-95-99.7” rule is oversimplified. This is a best case. It is well known that nominally statistically significant results can actually be noise because of factors left out of the model (see P. Anderson, Jan. 1992, *Physics Today*).

The English should be edited if possible. There are many typos (e.g. “firsrtly” in line 119) and many examples of awkward wording (“should be payed enough attention” in line 274).

I would be happy to review a revised manuscript if asked to, but if the editor thinks the revision is OK then I would have no objection to its being accepted without being sent to the referees.