Reviewer's report

Title: Ward staff education on severe sepsis/septic shock and mortality of ward patients: an original hypothesis.

Version: 1 Date: 26 March 2012

Reviewer: Doris Østergaard

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The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between a ward staff educational program on severe sepsis/septic shock and the mortality of adults admitted to hospital wards for at least one night.
The authors have studied the population at a total of 4 hospitals and should be praised for this large scale study.

Some specific comments and suggestions:
Please explain abbreviations in the abstract.
Introduction and purpose - it is suggested to be a little more specific in the description of the purpose of the study.
Method section – it is suggested to explain the statistic methods more. Not all might be familiar with the tests used.
Results section - it would be nice to know the percentage of nurses, doctors etc. who participated in the educational program. The number of nurses trained are higher than the number of doctors (see discussion) - should be mentioned in result section. Also to know the percentage of staff from each hospital - related to mortality.

Discussion:
Overall, the number of staff trained is small. The major drawback of the study is mentioned by the research group in the discussion. The research group did not investigate whether the educated ward staff may have identified or better treated clinical deterioration, or both according to the education received. Further the authors mention the incidence of sepsis and based on this it does not appear reasonable to hypothesize that the strong effect found in this study was due to the education as the number of patients with sepsis was low.
It is suggested to weaken the conclusion accordingly.
It is suggested to compare the results of this study with the data from reference number 14. In this study multi-professional education of 50% of doctors and 70% of nurses did not affect the rate of mortality or staff awareness of patients at risk. You training programme might have been better, but less were trained. Thereto, your data could be compared with other studies.
**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare I have no competing interests