Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 7 May 2012

Reviewer: Phillip Dellinger

Reviewer’s report:

Although this is an important area to pursue research in, this paper falls short of providing a good scientific approach to the problem of better identification and treatment of patients with severe sepsis on the floors of hospitals.

(1) It is not clear to me as to what the flow of patients admitted to the ICU with severe sepsis is in these hospitals. Surely some are directly admitted to the ICU and some first to the floors(wards) and then to the ICU. It is the latter group that should represent the study population.

(2) How as severe sepsis defined for the education program and for inclusion as a patient in the study analysis?

(3) What was the education plan, content and methods?

(4) Were the number of patients admitted to the ICU from the wards decreased with the initiation of the educational program? How about ICU and hospital stay?

(5) What was the mortality during the two time periods in pts. with severe sepsis?

(6) Why was the % of education achieved so low?

(7) The single table included does not show the study plan and results with great illustration capabilities.

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

My only COI is intellectual in that I am a leader in the SSC performance improvement program and we need research in this area. I was disappointed with what this ms offers in that direction.