Reviewer's report

Title: The impact of a standardised intramuscular sedation protocol for violence and acute behavioural disturbance in the emergency department

Version: 1 Date: 12 March 2010

Reviewer: Alex James

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Major Compulsory Revisions

1. There needs to be a more detailed description of the Department's policy for when IM sedation was appropriate. For a Department with a relatively modest number of presentations per annum this frequency of chemical restraint seems extraordinarily high.

2. Certainty. The authors state "We have shown shown that a structured approach to sedating agitated patients in the ED, where all initial doses of sedation were given IM, was simple, effective and safe for management of VABD". The data do not support these claims. The data show that duration of behaviour and repeated doses were reduced compared with historical controls. The make no measurement of simplicity and cannot claim to show effectiveness as the study did not seek to compare to a gold standard but to compare to existing practice.

But I would particularly take issue with describing this practice as safe. The data show that it is no more dangerous than existing practice but I would contend that 4 episodes of significant desaturation and one of airway obstruction in such a small number of patients could not be reasonable described as safe.

Likewise I think the first paragraph of the discussion is too strongly worded. This paragraph implies a generalisability of these data that I do not think is appropriate.

3. Statistics

- There is no measure of statistical significance between the two groups in terms of their adverse events

Minor Essential Revisions

I think the data relating to need for repeated doses would be better presented as a logistic regression analysis comparing the need for repeate doses in the historical and RCT groups. This would allow the calculation of an odds ratio and p value

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests