Reviewer’s report

Title: Validation of Ottawa Ankle Rules in Iran: A prospective survey

Version: 1 Date: 6 August 2005

Reviewer: gino M kerkhoffs

Reviewer’s report:

General
The manuscript needs rewriting by a native English speaker, although authors can be congratulated with their good effort.
The Ottawa ankle rules have been used for a great number of studies and this represents yet another one. However the current study has been carefully designed and therefore should get credit for that.
Background: this sections is too bulky and seems to be a compilation of all the information we already know about from colleague Stiell, should definitely be shortened. Also I would like to have some more information on why/how the medical situation in Iran differs from the other countries where the rules have already been implemented.
Methods
237 patients, however in results section 200 are analysed, where did the 37 go are these the same 37 cases that suffered from fractures or is this a coincidence? Please describe the flow of the patients through the study with use of a flowchart.
Add a list of the excluded patients and the reasons for exclusion.
The exclusion criterium that describes an exclusion when the injury is longer than 7 days before admission to the hospital should be changed into 48 hours, probably this will even better the results of the specificity. i would like to see the results of the patients that were examined by using the OARs, when admission was within 48 hours, since some of the characteristics will have diminished after 7 days.
Results:
37 patients are missing.
More than 50% of the patients reached the hospital within 7 hours, please give exact percentages and add in table, please read my commend in the methods section as well.
When describing the treatment of the injuries I have 2 remarks: 1. please make a difference between the fractures and the ligamenteous injuries. 2. it seems that the ligamenteous injuries are still treated with cast, I would like to refer to our work on this subject.
Discussion:
this is a nicely written section, maybe authors can add some spice by telling some more on the situation in Iranian medicine. The section on the costs is interesting but comes from nowhere. Please add a paragraph in methods and in results on this, to clarify how authors come to the figures or add a sentence in the discussion sections that the values are rough estimates made by the authors.
conclusions are valid and clear

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'

Best regards

Gino Kerkhoffs