Reviewer's report

Title: Prehospital score for acute disease: a community-based observational study in Japan

Version: 4 Date: 6 September 2007

Reviewer: Homer Tien

Reviewer's report:

General

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

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

The Background has too much confusing information. For example:

"78% ambulances staffed with emergency life-saving technicians"

"the proportion of emergency personnel with the license of emergency life-saving technician is only 30%"

"the proportion of ambulances staffed by emergency life-saving technician in 16 prefectures with metropolitan is still < 70%"

Please pick one item that illustrates the point that emergency life-saving technicians do not staff all ambulances.

As well, you already say that the study is perhaps not generalizable as Kishiwada City is different than the rest of the nation because of the lower proportion of hospitalizations. You need to also add that another reason it may not be generalizable is that you were able to obtain a complete data set in 91% of cases in Kishiwada city. However, in your background, you mention that only 25% of patients have their systolic bp taken and 27% have their oxygen sat taken. Therefore, unless there is some major reform amongst emergency life-saving or medical technicians, this triage tool will not be useful outside of Kishiwada city.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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 that I have no competing interests