Reviewer's report

**Title:** A Cross-sectional Study of Victorian Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance Paramedics Knowledge of the Valsalva Manoeuvre

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 30 July 2009

**Reviewer:** Matt Reed

**Reviewer's report:**

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. The authors have previously conducted a review of the literature to determine the three key requirement of the valsalva manoeuvre. This paper focuses on the paramedic community's knowledge of these. The paper is well written. The findings can be summarised as follows 'Paramedics and Emergency Physicians have poor knowledge of the exact method of performing the valsalva manoeuvre'. While I have no concerns with the methodology and presentation of the study and results, I wonder whether this might be better suited to a letter or short report. The findings are not in any way surprising and will not change practice although may have implications for training in this very specific area. I wonder why the authors only chose to ask the paramedics about the valsalva manoeuvre and not extend their study to the treatment of other common pre-hospital conditions which may have made it more interesting. Another concern is that the standards that the authors were expecting the paramedics to know were not recognised guidelines and indeed ones that the authors only identified themselves the previous year via a literature review. It is therefore not surprising that the paramedics and physicians were not aware of the exact criteria for performance of the valsalva manoeuvre - I doubt many of them would be aware of the authors previous work.

One change is required. There is no benefit of putting p values in Table 4 or 5. In a study with such small numbers if you perform statistical tests on 19 variables you are bound to get some statistical significance by chance. The p values do not add to the paper in fact detract from it.

In summary a well written scientifically sound study however with a low level of interest. It's main use is to highlight the exact method of performing the valsalva manoeuvre. I would recommend publication however would not put it as a high priority study if there were other papers that would be of more interest to the Emergency Medicine community.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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.