Reviewer's report

Title: Current use of medical eponyms - a need for global uniformity in scientific publications

Version: 2 Date: 16 November 2008

Reviewer: Alexander Woywodt

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions:
Methods: The methods section leaves room for improvement. The authors describe that they scrutinized 70 medical textbooks. What kind of textbooks were those and from which countries? To list them within the paper would be clumsy so maybe providing a list as online supplementary material would be preferable. The same applies to the indexes of journals. Which journals were used?

I do not agree with the feeling of the authors that eponyms will stay whether we like them or not - this is a very utilitarian way to regard the issue. I think it is fair to say that the issue remains controversial. I would suggest to rephrase some statements in this regard (e.g. p.8, second paragraph). The authors should also acknowledge that some may take their findings as further support to end the use of eponyms altogether.

Along the same line: Given all the confusion around Down and Down's: What is wrong with the patho-physiological term, trisomy 21?

Minor essential revisions:
I am not a native speaker myself but I reckon the authors could work on the text to improve the quality of the language. For example "we performed PubMed search several occasions" (page 4) and "many people have condemned use of medical eponym" (page 5).

Regarding what the authors call the second phase: They say they performed a PubMed search on several occasions and provide the dates of these searches in the table. I suggest to provide the dates in the text as well.

The authors report that one abstract used both forms of the term. This is extraordinary. The authors should cite the abstract to strengthen their point.

Discretionary revisions:
It would be interesting to know which form is used on commonly used resources on the internet, e.g. wikipedia, Uptodate. What do patients websites use? How do Down and Down's compare in a Google or Yahoo search and are there differences between countries? This work could be done in an afternoon and add further interesting clues.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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 have in the past published a BMJ article suggesting to stop the use of eponyms. Other than that: I declare that I have no competing interests.