Reviewer’s report

Title: Duration of fever and serious bacterial infections in children: a systematic review

Version: 1 Date: 24 March 2011

Reviewer: Niels Adriaenssens

Reviewer’s report:

Dear authors,

This systematic review is well described and performed. It tries to answer if duration of fever as a clinical marker helps identifying serious bacterial infections in children. I believe it would be an added value to the discussion if you clarify the implications for clinical practice more clearly in the discussion. The most important dilemma the GP is facing is not ‘is this infection viral or bacterial’ but ‘will my patient be able to overcome this infection with or without help?’. Should I intervene (e.g. prescribe antibiotics) or not. This question remains unanswered. Nevertheless I believe this paper merits publishing because it learns that duration of fever by itself is not necessarily a reason to prescribe antibiotics. In addition this study also identifies the need for well conducted studies in primary care.

Minor essential revisions:

Figure 1 presents a flow chart of the process of identification and exclusion. From the 96 full publications retrieved for evaluation 85 were excluded. 96 minus 85 equals 11. However only 7 studies were included. What happened with the 4 other publications?

Discretionary revisions:

In the manuscript you mention ‘two reviewers’, but in fact it is ‘two teams of two reviewers’

Table 2 could be supplementary material.

Results: 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence: The TWO remaining studies concerned ...

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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