Reviewer’s report

Title: The use of tetanus post-exposure prophylaxis guidelines by general practitioners and emergency departments in the Netherlands: A cross-sectional questionnaire study.

Version: 1 Date: 26 February 2014

Reviewer: Joke Korevaar

Reviewer’s report:

The objective of this study was to determine whether HC recommendations regarding T-PEP are in place both in a GP setting as well as in an ED setting. This is an important topic and needs attention.

Major comments:

This is a nicely designed study and well written manuscript with interesting results. The authors obtained a relatively high response rate, especially from EDs. After reading the manuscript some questions are left on which the authors could respond, or pay attention on, in their manuscript.

Interesting to see that the frequency of administrating T-PEP between EDs ranged from never to hundreds per week. It would be interesting to know more about these EDs, how can the authors explain, or which associations do they observe, this large difference?

Some GPs follow HC recommendations, some CGP recommendations, the authors describe the differences, but even after reading the manuscript GPs do not get a clear picture whether they should switch to HC recommendations or could stick to their CGP guideline. The authors could give some more guidance on this topic.

As state by the authors, it could be that the GPs and EDs that participate are the ones more likely to have T-PEP guidelines as the ones without are perhaps more likely to decline participation. Even in this selected group of ‘best’ performing (or highly interested) practices, 36% had adopted other guidelines of which most led to over-prescription. Since these are the ‘best’, it could be that the complete picture is less optimistic. Should we put much more attention to this problem, and convince all practices to follow HC guidelines? The authors could give more guidance in their discussion based on this topic.

Finally, could the authors supply more detailed information on the consequences of over-treatment besides side effects and costs? How expensive is it, and isn’t over-treatment still cheaper than undertreatment with the possible consequence of tetanus.

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a
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'