Reviewer's report

Title: Spectrum and antibiotic sensitivity of bacteria contaminating upper gut in patients with malabsorption syndrome from the tropics

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Version: 1 Date: 11 Feb 2003

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Level of interest: A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Advice on publication: Accept after discretionary revisions

The paper is interesting in that it documents the incidence of SIBO in a group of patients with malabsorption syndrome who have various diseases that might affect motility within the small bowel. It does not address, however, the very significant number of people in a developing country who have malabsorption syndrome without a demonstrable physical cause that might compromise motility. The high proportion of SIBO in the patients studied with malabsorption is interesting in that previous data have been conflicting and this paper tends to resolve some of that controversy, although there have been previous studies(1) that show that mucosal biopsy is the most reliable technique for validating SIBO.

The authors indicate in their introduction that studies on the bacterial population contaminating the upper gut from developing countries are sparse and there is no study from developing countries on this issue. Such is not the case. Studies from Burma (2,3) were the first to establish the concept of SIBO as a cause of general malnutrition in a paediatric population.

The demonstration of resistance to tetracycline and the high rates of sensitivity to quinolones is of significant clinical relevance as treatment until now has been problematic.

Overall, the methodology is good and there are several points that would be of interest, particularly to research workers in the field.

References
Competing interests:

None declared.