Reviewer's report

Title: Limitations of the MELD score in predicting mortality or need for removal from waiting list in patients awaiting liver transplantation

Version: 2 Date: 3 August 2009

Reviewer: Michael A Fink

Reviewer's report:

The authors have addressed most of my concerns and those of the other reviewers. I note, however, that a major error persists in the current version. Table 4 identifies the sensitivity and specificity of CTP as 68.9% and 70.1%, respectively and the sensitivity and specificity of MELD as 62.0% and 72.6%, respectively. Derived from the table, the correct figures are: 69.0% and 70.5% for CTP and 62.1% and 72.7% for MELD. In the abstract and the results section, the sensitivity and specificity figures are reversed: "The sensitivity and specificity to identify mortality or severe deterioration for CTP was 70.1% and 68.9%, respectively; for MELD, it was 72.6% and 62.0%, respectively."

In terms of determining the ideal cut-off for each of the measurements, this would usually be derived from the ROC analysis. The authors report that the cut-offs were "determined by minimizing the false positive and false negative results of each score". It is not clear to me exactly how this was done and I think that the appropriateness of this technique needs to be confirmed by a statistician.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.