Reviewer’s report

Title: Early predictors of mortality in critically ill elderly patients with sepsis

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Reviewer: Jean-Louis Vincent

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The authors reviewed some prognostic factors in elderly patients with sepsis in their ICU.

General comments

The message is hard to capture. It is well known that elderly patients have a higher mortality rate than young ones. It is also well known that severity scores (SAPS or APACHE scores) are the best prognostic markers: this is why they have been developed. However, the prognostic value of temperature may be interesting. Unfortunately, the authors failed to explicit these findings: they only conclude that “temperature” can predict mortality. How? The data are a bit contradictory in the manuscript: the Tables 1 and 3 seems to indicate that a lower temperature is associated with worse outcomes, but the text (top of page 9) indicates the risk of death increases with each degree of temperature. Which one is true? The paper should be entirely rewritten to emphasize these findings. The title of the paper should also be altered accordingly.

Other comments

1. page 5: why did the authors use these old 1981 criteria? They are outdated (check the more recent consensus document published by Levy et al in Crit Care Med several years ago)

2. It is weird that most septic episodes were due to Candida – this is very unusual. Please explain

3. The abstract should include mortality rates and temperatures.