Reviewer's report

Title: Risk factors for delirium in acutely admitted elderly patients: a prospective cohort study

Version: 1 Date: 28 January 2005

Reviewer: Sijmen Duursma

Reviewer's report:

General

A simple, well performed study on delirium. The methods and results are correctly prescribed. The conclusions are not all correct, see below.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

* The MMSE has been used in patients who had or might be developing a delirium. The question arises how reliable is the use and interpretation of these examinations in patients with or developing a delirium? At least a remark regarding this aspect should be made by the authors, although it may also have consequences for the conclusions of the study.

* In the conclusions the authors mention a decreased number of leucocytes in patients with a delirium. However, as far as I can read in table 1, the number of leucytes was within normal limits. The authors here have to comment on this point or make a correction in the text.

* My suggestion for the conclusion, page 9 and page 2 should be:
  In conclusion, in this study the risk factors for delirium were cognitive and physical impairment and a high serum urea nitrogen concentration. These observations might contribute to an early recognition and treatment of delirium in acutely admitted older patients.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

* page 2, first paragraph, line 2: suggestion, not just mention the 'recognition' of delirium but 'the early recognition'.

* page 2, second paragraph, line 6: what is 'increased functional impairment' in this study? Only data at admission have been presented.

* page 4, last line: ‘fellow in geriatric physician’ should be ‘fellow in geriatric medicine’.

* page 5, first line: 'was scored' should be 'were scored'.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.