Reviewer’s report

Title: Effect of heptavalent pneumococcal conjugate vaccination on invasive pneumococcal disease in preterm born infants

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Reviewer: Thilde Nordmann Winther

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The aim of this study was to evaluate the impact of PCV7 on IPD in preterm born infants in Germany by comparing the 2000 and 2007 birth cohorts.

The study reveal a reduction of IPD notifications in preterm born children that are comparable to the reduction seen in children born at term after introduction of the general pneumococcal vaccination programme in Germany.

The authors conclude, that the data suggest that PCV7 vaccination is similarly effective in protecting preterm born infants from IPD compared to full term children.

As I pointed out already, there are some major problems concerning the study design or maybe just the exposition. Some of the problems have been described by the authors, some of them haven’t. Furthermore, the number of cases are very low, and therefore I still don’t think you can draw any conclusions on the basis of this study. The reduction in IPD among preterm born children could as well be a result of natural fluctuation in the IPD rate, herd immunity etc.

I am aware that it is very difficult to collect data from great numbers, but I think the numbers are too small, and the article doesn’t add new knowledge. The data might be of local interest, or the authors should collect data a few more years.

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.