Reviewer's report

Title: Can near real-time monitoring of Emergency Department diagnoses facilitate early response to sporadic meningococcal infection? - prospective and retrospective evaluations

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Reviewer: Jan Hendrik Richardus

Reviewer's report:

This is a well written manuscript with a clear, practical and relevant research question. The authors have attempted to assess the issue of rapid response through real-time monitoring of ED diagnosis in several ways, both prospectively and retrospectively. I think the data are as good as it can get. The evaluation method, determining the sensitivity and PPV, is appropriate.

Interestingly, the ED-based identification of meningococcal disease does not provide any advantage above the current reporting system. This may not be a very surprising conclusion, given the nature of the different reporting systems, but it is good that it is clearly documented. There is not much literature on this issue yet. The authors provide a good discussion, including strengths and limitations of the study.

Discretionary revision:

The only question I have is why there is no time advantage of daily ED surveillance compared to conventional reporting? Is this because of the low PPV, or is there an independent factor involved? This may need some clarification.

Otherwise I have not specific comments.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.