Reviewer’s report

Title: Five-Years Surveillance of invasive Aspergillosis in a University Hospital

Version: 3 Date: 2 November 2010

Reviewer: Benjamin Park

Reviewer’s report:

This paper has been improved substantially, but is still in need of a few clarifications, improvements, and editing for English.

Major revisions:

1. Methods, nosocomial definition. I understand the need for a negative respiratory culture in order to make the definition as specific as possible. However, including this criterion subjects the definition (and therefore also the incidence rates) to the same ascertainment bias that the authors are trying to minimize. I imagine that respiratory cultures are not performed on admission for all patients; the act of obtaining these cultures is also selecting for a certain population. Additionally, the sensitivity of respiratory cultures is not likely to be very high.

I would recommend defining any "possible nosocomial" infection as one occurring within 7 days, with "likely nosocomial" infections as those occurring with a prior negative respiratory culture.

2. Please explain why 125 cases (58%) were not able to be determined if nosocomial or not.

3. Present age as a median.

4. Authors say that 39 pts had transplantation, but in the next paragraph say that 34 nosocomial cases were up to 100 days after transplant, and 11 others were late (>100 days). This does not add up.

5. It would be extremely helpful and informative if the authors expanded table 4 to include all alerts (not just microbiology).

6. Discussion. Although it is tempting to compare incidences to other institutions and attribute differences to actual differences in burden, it is also very likely that differences in methodology are accounting for them. Without real evidence, I would not claim that antifungal prophylaxis practices are causing a lower incidence at this institution.

7. Discussion, p. 14 line 1. This appears to be new data in the discussion section, which is better presented in results. Furthermore, how are these incidences being calculated? There is no description in the methods.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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