Author's response to reviews

Title: Clinical and Temporal Patterns of Severe Pneumonia Causing Critical Illness during Hajj

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Version: 5 Date: 9 April 2012

Author's response to reviews: see over
Authors reply (4 / 3 / 2012):

We thank the editors and reviewers for their thoughtful comments and the opportunity to re-submit a revised and improved manuscript. We have integrated our point-by-point response to the comments below.

Please note that the authors' replies are in "Arial font" for your convenience.
Reviewer's report

Title: Clinical and Temporal Patterns of Severe Pneumonia Causing Critical Illness during Hajj

Version: 1 Date: 20 January 2012

Reviewer: Shevin Jacob

Additional editorial comments:

Thanks for your revisions, which have been viewed by the reviewers. They have indicated some remaining minor issues that need to be addressed.

Also, please format your title page according to the guidelines in our instructions for authors, removing the sections on the advance and implications of the project which are currently included before the abstract. Please also refer to authors by their initials in the Authors' contributions section.

Thank you. The title page was revised and modified with respect to the journals guidelines in the instructions for authors.

The sections on the advance and implications of the project in the title page were removed.

The authors were referred to by their respective initials in the author's contributions sections.
Minor Essential Revisions:

Version: 4 Date: 15 March 2012

Reviewer: Shevin Jacob

Reviewer’s report:

I am happy with the revisions made by the authors in this version of the manuscript.

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore):

1. Under Results>Clinical Outcomes, do you mean to compare actual short term mortality with predicted long term mortality? Wouldn’t it make more sense to compare actual short term mortality with predicted short term mortality?

Thank you. Ideally, we would prefer to compare 20-day actual mortality with 20-day predicted mortality; however the most valid mortality predictions with APACHE scoring systems are after the stay in hospital (i.e. hospital mortality). Unfortunately do not have a readily available tool to predict mortality at 20 days.

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

1. Under Methods>Study Subjects and Data Collection, ‘Collected data was reviewed’ should be ‘Collected data were reviewed’ (p. 9, 4th line from bottom).

Thank you. This mistake was corrected.
2. Figures need to be renumbered to correspond to numbering in text. Figure 2 should be 2a, 3 should be 2b and 4 should be 3.

Thank you. This mistake was corrected; we have thoroughly reviewed the figure legends and numbering and corrected them to correspond with the numbering in text.

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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.
Minor Essential Revisions

• Figure legend (1,2a,2b,3) does not match label on figures (1,2,3,4)

Thank you. This mistake was corrected; we have thoroughly reviewed the figure legends and numbering and corrected them to correspond with the numbering in text.

Discretionary Revisions

• Background

  o Para 1, sentences 3–5: Shorten this description (interesting information but could be more concise)

  Thank you. We have done our best to shorten the above mentioned 3 sentences in an attempt to be more concise.

  o Para 1, sentence 9: do not list all sizes, rather … ranged in size from 4mx4m through 8mx12m

  Thank you. We have modified the above-mentioned sentence to list the range rather than all sizes.
Para 2, sentence 3: add word “approximately” before number of new cases of pneumonia

Thank you. We have performed the required modification to the above referred to sentence.

Methods

Para 1, sentence 7: were all the MTb cases included culture confirmed? If so, please clarify this. If not, please specify the proportion which was laboratory confirmed.

Thank you. All Mycobacterium tuberculosis cases were confirmed via culture.

This sentence was added to the methods section - Study Subjects and Data Collection - subsection, lines 19 and 20.

Conclusion

Sentence 1: I question use of the word “common” when you have shown there are 21 episodes of pneumonia causing critical illness per million Hajj pilgrims. Perhaps you are referring to it causing a large proportion of all critical illnesses during Hajj?

Thank you. We have substituted the word "common" with "major". Perhaps it will serve our purpose in emphasizing the impact and incidence of severe pneumonia causing critical illness during Hajj.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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