Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 8 January 2012

Reviewer: Katherine Gibney

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Results / Concomitant Illnesses and Therapies Received: Please be consistent in the sentence structure when you have a sentence stem followed by a list -- there are multiple variations in these sections
2. Discussion / 2nd Paragraph: Change "internationally.." to "international cooperation"

Discretionary Revisions
1. It would be worth discussing the H1N1 pandemic and the possible impact this had on the number of ICU admissions for pneumonia and the profile of etiologic agents involved.
2. I suggest mentioning recommendations that were current during the 2009 / 2010 Hajj regarding pre-Hajj vaccination for pilgrims, including influenza / H1N1 vaccination
3. Methods / 1st paragraph: You mention the primary outcome was the incidence rate but no denominator is given. Do you mean proportion of ICU admissions that have a primary diagnosis of pneumonia? (This is what you've reported)
4. Methods / Statistical analysis: This section could be reduced in length, including removing the first two sentences which are unnecessary.
5. Results / Baseline characteristics: The last sentence should not appear in the results section but should be incorporated into the discussion section.
6. Results / Clinical Outcomes / 1st sentence: Suggest changing end of sentence to "...... among critically ill patients with pneumonia"
7. Table 1: Consider reporting most common nationalities (e.g. 5 most frequent followed by "other")
8. Table 1: Include lower age category (e.g. <30 years, 0 (0%))
9. Figure 2: Change to a more traditional epi-curve (e.g. http://cphp.sph.unc.edu/focus/vol1/issue5/1-5EpiCurves_issue.pdf)
10. Figure 2: Change title to better reflect what you are reporting (i.e. avoid "incidence", specify "pneumonia" only includes cases admitted to ICU)

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
**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