Reviewer's report

Title: Complicated malaria and other severe febrile illness in a pediatric ward in Libreville, Gabon

Version: 3 Date: 25 June 2012

Reviewer: Richard Idro

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The manuscript is much better now. However the abstract still needs some work. The number of children recruited with febrile illness, hospitalized with clinical malaria and with confirmed malaria is unclear in the abstract. For example, “A total of 418 children with febrile illness were hospitalized for primary diagnosis of complicated malaria. Only 56.7% (n=95) of the 168 patients treated as clinical malaria cases had Plasmodium falciparum positive blood smears. “ This should be made clearer. Similarly, the statement in the abstract “Overtreatment with antimalarial was 43% and only 29% of patients treated with both antibiotics and antimalarial had co-morbidities.“ should be made clearer.

Secondly, the concern by the second reviewer about IRB approval and use of oral consent in a study of more than minimal risk was not addressed. It would sound oral permission was sought for obtaining demographic data and non for use clinical data.

Minor changes

Methods
1. Line 76 Should be .. lower Respiratory tract infection
2. Treatment: How is malaria treated in Gabon? The dose of quinine quoted (12.5 mg salt/kg/day, intravenous) is too low.

Results:
3. Line 118 – benefitted from…not for …; 126: which sex ratio?
4. Can the main reasons for consultation be put in a table?

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.