**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** A snapshot from ongoing enhanced surveillance of invasive listeriosis in Lombardy, Italy, 2006-2010

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 21 November 2012

**Reviewer:** Brita Bruun

**Reviewer’s report:**

The manuscript contains a wealth of information on the population dynamics of Listeria monocytogenes from invasive infections in Lombardy, Italy, that is bound to be of interest to specialist in this bacterium's epidemiology. The aims of the study are clearly stated and the methods used are appropriate and adequately described, if one disregards the need for improving the English. Limitations of the study are given, and the conclusions are supported by the data. The title and the abstract convey the results correctly.

**MAJOR COMPULSARY REVISIONS**

**General:**
1. The manuscript is far too long and must be shortened by 25-30%, which in part can be achieved by avoiding repetition of data in the text and in the tables plus figures.
2. The English is understandable, but needs a good deal of revision before being publishable. Some of these will be noted below, but I recommend that the authors seek help as it is impossible for me to list all my specific suggestions.

**RESULTS**

**Paragraph 2:**

a) As I read the text there were 118 non-pregnancy cases with 118 isolates and 15 pregnancy cases with an isolate from both mother and child in one case, giving 16 isolates (118 + 16 = 134 isolates). Were the "double" pregnancy isolates different from each other? If not, shouldn't the case only be represented by one isolate?

b) The text states that 56.2% of the non-pregnancy cases were older than 65 years, while Table 1 has 64.4% of cases being more than or equal to 65 years. This needs clarification.

c) Text states that 96.3% of isolates from non-pregnancy cases derived from blood and/or CSF, while Table 1 has 76.3% + 20.3% (=96.6%) of isolates derived from blood and/or CSF. This needs clarification.

**Paragraph 3:** The text states that the number of cases with serotype 1/2a increased from 7 in 2006 to 23 in 2010, but as far as I can tell from Table 1 it
rose from 19 in 2006 to 34 in 2009 and then fell to 24 in 2010.

DISCUSSION

Paragraph 4. As far as I can count, Fig. 3 shows that there are 11 MLST clonal complexes with 121 isolates; the text says "PFGE and MLST ..... gave very consistent results allowing to include 112 out of the 134 isolates under study into 12 clusters containing three strains." Do the authors mean "PFGE and MLST ..... gave very consistent results allowing to include 112 and 121, respectively, out of the 134 isolates under study into 12 and 11 clusters containing three strains"?

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

RESULTS

Paragraph 4. The sentence "12 pulsotype clusters, including three or more isolates, were identified (Fig.2)." is repeated as part of the contents of a sentence appearing one line below.

Paragraph 6: The section starting with "The 1/2a/CC38 isolates" and ending with "affected subjects older than 65 years." is superfluous, as the information is given in Table 2. It is also unnecessary to list the various underlying conditions/diseases. Furthermore, the text states that 27 (84%) involved subjects older than 65 years, while Table 2 has that 26 persons were older than 65 years.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

1. Using the term "MLST types" instead of "sequence type" is preferable, as is "typing" instead of "subtyping".


RESULTS

Paragraph 4. Non-significant serotypes differences in relation to age and fatality rate could be deleted (shortens the manuscript).

Paragraph 6. The patient demographic and clinical information whose isolates belong to cluster 11 should be limited to possible differences between this cluster and the other clusters (shortens the manuscript).

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: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the
statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.