Reviewer's report

Title: Patient characteristics but not virulence factors discriminate between asymptomatic and symptomatic E. coli bacteriuria in the hospital

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Reviewer: Nils Rodhe

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Major Compulsory Revisions:
This study addresses an important problem - that is to differ between ASB and sUTI when finding bacteriuria. However, there are some problems when defining ASB:

First there is the case where the patient is not able to report urinary symptoms (a demented or seriously ill patient). In this study I understand that these individuals were excluded.

The second group constitutes of patients with no distinct urinary symptoms but with more general symptoms that leads the doctor to suspect a sUTI. Here the evidence of benefit of antibiotic treatment is low and most cases could probably be classified as ASB.

The third group could represent those patients where there is no suspicion of a sUTI but a urinary was yet taken (you could say by mistake).

1. You should better clarify, in the method, in which patients there was a culture obtained not just state “who presented with bacteriuria”. Are they from the second and/or third group mentioned above? Was there a culture obtained from all patients or from those with some kind of symptom?

2. You should take this more in account in the discussion, because the way you recruit patients for a urinary culture affects the ability to interpret the results in terms of risk factors – it could be that meeting a patient with some possible risk factor could gives you an impulse to obtain a urinary culture.

Minor Essential Revisions:
“Complicated bacteriuria” – what is that?

Discretionary Revisions
If there was a culture taken in all patients - is it possible to get information on the total number of patients to relate to the number of bacteriurias?

What about those with bacteriuria but with other bacteria than E coli? How big was this group?

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