Reviewer’s report

Title: The incidence and aetiology of hospitalised community-acquired pneumonia among Vietnamese adults: A prospective surveillance in central Vietnam

Version: 1 Date: 20 December 2012

Reviewer: Sibongile Walaza

Reviewer’s report:

The authors are addressing an important question for their region and this adds to the body of knowledge about aetiology of community acquired pneumonia. Although methods were well described, it would be easier for the readers if the inclusion criterion for LRTI was described in this paper. The discussion and conclusions were well balanced and supported by the data.

Comments:

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Under methods for laboratory testing – more detail on transport of samples and storage would be useful as this affects the quality of sample and the results thereof.

2. The authors should explain how they dealt with missing information

3. For patient enrolment – The authors should check the numbers with completed X-ray interpretation in the flow chart, 356 vs 355.

4. The authors did not explain how malnutrition was assessed.

5. For demographic data it’s useful to put n/N especially when the denominators change for an example the authors reported that 167 (36%) of cases were CAP, it’s not clear what was the denominator ( number with complete x-ray interpretation?, if so then percentage is not correct)

6. Receiving antibiotics prior admission- for clarity, authors should clarify time period before admission.

7. For the results on aetiology – it is not clear what the denominator for PCR positive from quality assured sputum samples is – suggest authors confirm the numbers and percentage positive.

8. The authors mention that access to hospital care was not a source of bias because many mild cases were admitted to hospital in their setting – to support their argument, I suggest that authors quantify the proportion of mild cases that are admitted to hospital.

Discretionary revisions

9. Exclusion criteria – The authors excluded patients with HIV or underlying immunosuppression but no justification was provided for this- It would have been
interesting to describe this group of patients to see if aetiology for CAP is different.

10. Calculations for incidence were limited to patients from Nha Trang and justification/rationale for this was not provided

11. Under the description of study population, suggest that authors add the median age and range of the study population, this would give a better understanding of age distribution of the population.

12. For the sputum samples that were tested by both culture and PCR, it would be interesting to show the results and describe whether the yield was different and how this compared to results from other studies.

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

**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.