Reviewer's report

Title: Hydrocephalus is a rare outcome in community-acquired bacterial meningitis in adults: a retrospective analysis

Version: 4 Date: 28 January 2013

Reviewer: Rodrigo Hasbun

Reviewer's report:

The study by Bodilsen et al reports on the prevalence of hydrocephalus in 167 patients with community-acquired meningitis. I have the following observations that need to be addressed.

Major revisions:

1) I would recommend to revise the tables. They should be simplified and summarized.

For example, in Table 1, I would just state the etiologies of bacterial meningitis and in the footnote state that 150 were diagnosed by inclusion criteria 1, 7 each by inclusion criteria 2 and 3, and 3 by inclusion criteria 4. You could also state in the footnote the etiologies of the hydrocephalus cases.

in Table 2 and 3, it would be helpful to summarize the data and to compare it to the group of patients that had a CT scan that did not show hydrocephalus.

It is interesting that none of the 5 patients with hydrocephalus received adjunctive steroids. I would also summarize the median delay of appropriate antibiotic therapy (hours) between both groups. I would summarize the GOS as 1-4 representing an adverse clinical outcomes. It should be clear when the GOS were determined (at discharge?)

Table 4 should be modified to classify the outcomes as 1-4 vrs 5 and stratified by the presence or absence of hydrocephalus and CT scan. A footnote should include the presence and types of intracranial abnormalities in those groups (GOS 1-4 vrs 5).

I would also include the Evan's index in the 5 cases of hydrocephalus to describe the severity of the disease.

Minor revisions:

1) In the statistics section, change the "," for a "." in 0.05.

2) In the last two paragraphs of the results section I would change "microbiologically relevant antibiotic" to "appropriate antibiotic therapy". and change "spinal tap" to "lumbar puncture".

3) I would italicize all the pathogens.

4) I would add page numbers.
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