Author's response to reviews

Title: Disease burden of herpes zoster in Sweden - predominance in the elderly and in women- a register based study

Authors:

Marie K Studahl (marie.studahl@infect.gu.se)
Max Petzold (max.petzold@gu.se)
Tobias Cassel (tcassel@spmsd.com)

Version: 3 Date: 8 February 2013

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

Please consider for publication the submitted manuscript entitled “Disease burden of herpes zoster in Sweden - predominance in the elderly and in women- a register-based study”. In Sweden no national pediatric immunization against varicella zoster virus has been implemented, but a discussion is ongoing whether to start vaccination or not. In addition, the live attenuated zoster vaccine has not been available in Sweden.

We present Swedish national data on herpes zoster related hospitalizations, mortality and prescription of antivirals which hitherto not have been published. The use of the solid data from the National Registers, with very low number of drop-outs and lack of principal diagnoses, makes the results from the study reliable. In accordance to previous research in other countries, herpes zoster disease is dominating among the elderly and also in women, a fact that remain after age-adjusting analyses. Particularly, in the 50-59 age group there was an almost 2-fold higher prescription rate in women than in men.

The study provides baseline data of the burden of herpes zoster disease before the implementation of vaccination against varicella zoster virus reactivation. Knowledge of these data is important to provide a possibility to monitor a change in the herpes zoster incidence after implementation of varicella vaccination program and/or herpes zoster vaccination.

Yours Sincerely,

Marie Studahl
M.D, Ph.D
Department of Infectious Diseases,
Göteborg University Hospital
SE- 416 85 Göteborg
Sweden       marie.studahl@infect.gu.se