Reviewer's report

Title: Emergence of sporadic non-clustered cases of hospital-associated listeriosis among immunocompromised adults in southern Taiwan from 1992 to 2013: effect of precipitating immunosuppressive agents

Version: 3 Date: 9 March 2014

Reviewer: David Banach

Reviewer's report:

This is a resubmission of an article previously reviewed which describes an epidemiological retrospective analysis of cases of listeriosis focusing on the distinction between community-associated and hospital-associated cases. The authors have responded to previously requested revisions. As the authors point out in the conclusions, due to the relative rarity of listeriosis this retrospective study does add to the existing literature.

Major Compulsory Revisions

The finding of significantly higher mortality rate in the hospital-associated cases compared to community-associated cases is important and should be added to the study conclusion.

Table 2 – Please clarify the values for the hospital-associated cases. Were these clinical syndromes, labs from the date of diagnosis, the date of initial clinical presentation or a different time? A footnote would suffice.

Minor Essential Revisions

Line 128 – It would be difficult for the authors to be certain that the cases they identified as non-clustered were not related to any other cases given that this is a retrospective analysis based on data collected at their institution rather than an epidemiological investigation. Please clarify that non-clustered cases were patients unrelated to any other cases in time or place among cases identified in this study or at this institution.

Line 138 – Please describe the radiographic findings deemed by the authors as compatible with listeriosis

Discretionary Revisions

Line 225 – The final sentence of this paragraph does not describe a result but rather offers an explanation for this case. I would favor moving this into the discussion or potentially removal altogether.

Line 305 – This final statement, while true, does not seem to reflect the findings of the study. I would suggest either removing this line or potentially incorporating it into the discussion.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
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 I have no competing interests