Reviewer’s report

Title: Oesophageal Varices, Schistosomiasis, and Mortality among Patients Admitted with Haematemesis in Mwanza, Tanzania: a Prospective Cohort Study

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Reviewer: Erwin Biecker

Reviewer’s report:

In their article „Oesophageal varices, schistosomiasis and mortality among patients admitted with haematemesis in Mwanza, Tanzania“ the authors prospectively analyzed the underlying cause for upper gastrointestinal bleeding in a referral hospital in Tanzania.

The authors showed that the majority of patients bleed from oesophageal varices and that portal hypertension was mainly caused by schistosomiasis. Analysis of different clinical parameters revealed a portal vein diameter >13 mm and water sourced from the Victoria lake to have a sensitivity and specificity of more than 90% for the presence of oesophageal varices.

From these data, the authors developed a model that allows prediction of oesophageal varices and to guide the use of endoscopy.

The findings of the authors are of great interest in regions were schistosomiasis is endemic. The study is well planed and conducted and the relevant literature is cited. However, some points of criticism remain:

Specific comments:

Minor Essential Revisions:

• Given the high prevalence of hepatitis B in the region, it would be of interest to further discriminate the underlying cause of portal hypertension in cirrhosis related to hepatitis B, schistosomiasis or a combination of both.

• Discussion, first page, last paragraph (“…it is essential…”) : the mentioned numbers are probably to high, since almost all of the data is from patients with oesophageal bleeding due to liver cirrhosis. Most of the patients die from complications of cirrhosis and not from the bleeding itself. This should be discussed.

• Did the patients give informed consent to take part in the study?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests