Reviewer's report

Title: Serotype-specific mortality from invasive Streptococcus pneumoniae disease revisited

Version: 1 Date: 1 March 2004

Reviewer: Keith Klugman

Reviewer's report:

General
This paper describes an increase in serotype specific mortality for type 3 pneumococci, and a decreased mortality associated with type 1 in a retrospective study, with risk ratios adjusted in a multivariate model

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
None

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
The authors make biological arguments to support the excess capsular production of type 3 as a possible explanation for its virulence. They do not offer any explanation for the decreased risk posed by type 1 - possible confounders such as lack of antibiotic resistance, younger age, lack of comorbidities are presumably dealt with by the logistic regression, so what other explanations can the authors suggest for the lower mortality associated with this type?

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

One of these authors, Dr Konradsen, as head of a WHO reference centre on pneumococcal serotyping, serotyped pneumococci from a vaccine trial conducted by my research unit and was acknowledged in our publication as a member of the Vaccine Trialists Group.