Author's response to reviews

Title: Nosocomial outbreak of neonatal Salmonella enteritidis meningitis in a rural hospital in northern Tanzania

Authors:
- Hogne Vaagland (hogne.vaagland@cih.uib.no)
- Bjorn Blomberg (bjorn.blomberg@cih.uib.no)
- Carsten Kruger (thea.carsten.krueger@web.de)
- Naftali Naman (nbnaman@elct.org)
- Roland Jureen (roland.jureen@med.uib.no)
- Nina Langeland (nina.langeland@helse-bergen.no)

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Author's response to reviews:

To
The Editor,
Biomedcentral Infectious Diseases

Dar es Salaam, 2 September 2004
Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the revised version of the manuscript entitled "Nosocomial outbreak of neonatal Salmonella enterica serotype Enteritidis meningitis in a rural hospital in northern Tanzania" (please note that the title has changed slightly in accordance with one of the reviewer's comments).

We gratefully appreciate the comments of the reviewer, Dr Kariuki. The manuscript has now been revised according to his comments. Below follows a point-by-point response to his comments:

I. The major compulsory revisions mentioned by the reviewer was the following: As one of the main criteria for establishment of this outbreak as being nosocomial was pulsed-field gel-electrophoresis of endonuclease restricted genomic DNA of S. Enteritidis, it would be a good idea to incorporate the gel photo in results.

- We fully agree with this comment. The revised manuscript contains a photo of the PFGE gel as requested.

II. Comments on the Abstract:
1. Methods: May include susceptibility testing and PFGE as tools used to investigate the outbreak.
   - Susceptibility testing and PFGE has now been mentioned in the methods part of the abstract.

2. Results: Write out PFGE in full first, then abbreviate subsequently.
   - PFGE is now written in full the first time it is mentioned in the abstract and in the text, and thereafter the abbreviation is used.

III. Comments on the Background section:
1. Line 1: Nontyphoidal salmonellae (spelling)
   - We have added the final "e" to salmonellae

IV: Comments on the Methods section:
1. Line 1: From a total of ...
   - We have now written "From a total of ..." in stead of "Among a total of ...".

V: Comments on the Results section:
1. Out of the 24 children with suspected meningitis please clarify what number of children had both blood and CSF taken.
   - Both blood culture and spinal fluid culture was obtained from a total of 15 children. A sentence on this has been added to the results section as requested.
2. Line 4: Use Salmonella enterica serotype Enteritidis, then abbreviate to S. Enteritidis subsequently.
- As requested, we have now used the full name "Salmonella enterica serotype Enteritidis" the first time, and thereafter abbreviated it to S. Enteritidis. We have kept the "S." in italics and "Enteritidis" in non-italics, as we understand to be the standard.
- We have also updated the title of the manuscript to conform to this.

3. Italicize names of bacteria.
- The names of bacteria have now been italicized.

VI: Comments on the Discussion section:
1. Line 3: Delete "held together with"
- "held together with" has been deleted.

2. Line 10: Several factors ... Not clear if authors refer to possible vehicles for NTS transmission or actual/implicated sources of transmission of NTS, eg explain how use of medications and diagnostics could be a source of NTS.
- We have amended and elaborated on this part of the manuscript to read as follows: "In previous nosocomial outbreaks caused by salmonellae, the sources of infection have been related to the use of contaminated medications, diagnostics, blood products, banked human milk, the use of raw eggs or yeast in tube feeding and improper disinfection of devices such as rubber tubes for oropharyngeal suction." We hope this clarifies and addresses the comment appropriately.

3. Paragraph 2, end of sentence 2: You need a reference on previous reports of MDR NTS.
- As requested, we have added a reference on MDR NTS in the area (reference no. 10).

4. Paragraph 2, Line 9: replace "naturally aggressive course" with "poor prognosis"
- We have replaced the phrase "naturally aggressive course" with "poor prognosis"

VII: Comments on the Table.
1. Only one table is shown so no need to label as Table 1. Entry on birth weight in row 6 is missing (indicated by a dash -), replace with ND.
- The table has now been labeled "Table" without the "1".
- "-" has been replaced by "ND."

VIII: Other changes.
Apart from addressing the comments of the reviewer, we have also rearranged the table so that it may fit better within an A4 page.

We thank you very much for the quick response to our first version of this manuscript, and hope you may find this second revised version acceptable for publication. The manuscript or parts of it has not been published or submitted for publication elsewhere. We are not aware of any financial or other relationship that may lead to a conflict of interest.

The attached manuscript has been read and approved by all authors.

Yours sincerely,

Bjorn Blomberg
Dar es Salaam