Reviewer's report

Title: Clinical and epidemiological data of pertussis in fully immunized children in Lithuania

Version: 2 Date: 12 October 2004

Reviewer: Juhani Eskola

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a study on the clinical characteristics of patients with serologically confirmed pertussis. Same kind of data can already be found in the literature; thus the additional information to the existing knowledge remains limited. However, the main message that older children with longstanding cough quite frequently have pertussis, is important. The number of children in the final analysis is rather small (53 out of 70 originally enrolled had evidence of pertussis, and only 32 of them were fully vaccinated).

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

I do not understand what the authors mean by saying that 11 children had 2 episodes of coughing and 11 had only one episode (and analysing these two as separate groups).

The authors state that the percentage of children with pertussis has increased from 35% to 43% between 1991 and 2001. It would be important to know where these figures come from, and how reliable and complete the surveillance and diagnosis was.

The criteria used (more than two weeks of cough with certain symptoms and positive IgM/IgA antibodies) needs to be justified. It does not follow the generally used criteria in the scientific literature.

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

The conclusion of the authors that 'when prolonged cough is present in fully vaccinated children, it is frequently (84.4%) associated with the classical pertussis symptoms' needs clarification.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No
Declaration of competing interests:
None