Reviewer's report

Title: Clinical presentation of pertussis in fully immunized children in Lithuania

Version: 3 Date: 26 January 2005

Reviewer: Hester E de Melker

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
   Question is not very clearly stated. Probably aim of the authors is to describe the pertussis in vaccinated children. This is not a new question and already described in literature, but not for probably not for their country.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
   No, they are still not well described. In particular the study population is not well defined/described. What do the authors mean by hospitalization in the various sections. Sometimes it seems whether the study refers to all (or a part?) patients admitted to the hospital, while in other parts they mention that only 8 patients were hospitalized (results) or none were hospitalized (discussion).
   We think they that the authors mean that the data collection took place in the hospital, but that 8 (or none?) were indeed hospitalized. Confusing?
   The authors present now medians in the result section, but do not describe this in the method section. From the method section it is not clear which groups are compared and why.
   What do the authors mean by the two separate episodes (waves)?

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
   Data is probably sound, but the description is not clear (see also point 2).
   For example: Do the authors concluded that in their patient group of vaccinated pertussis patients, pertussis is mild (i.e. not very typical) or the reverse i.e. classical symptoms occur in most patients.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   The authors have not succeeded sufficiently in the main issues given in the previous review (see also comments above). Only minor changes were made. For example they added to the introduction a sentence on improved diagnosis and awareness as one of the possible reasons for increased incidence, without referring to other possible explanations.
   The authors still give to much detail in background section and discussion section.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   The authors do not fully discuss their results, but refer more to results already published data.
   Their statements are sometimes vague; for example with regard of the statement on house hold contacts information on at least age in related to the contacts is missing.
   Main message is not very clearly stated. I guess that it is that in their
country vaccinated children contract pertussis 9 years after vaccination? This is not discussed in relation to other findings in literature.
6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes
7. Is the writing acceptable? The paper is not very clearly written (see above). An other example is the part on antibiotic treatment and their sentence on the difference between the duration of cough and antibiotic use.

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