Reviewer's report

Title: Effects of Type and Level of Training on Variation in Physician Knowledge in the Use and Acquisition of Blood Cultures: Cross Sectional Survey

Version: 3 Date: 3 May 2005

Reviewer: Daniel Gregson

Reviewer's report:

General

This paper documents that physician knowledge regarding blood cultures depends on the level of training, and specifically prior theoretical and practical training in this area. As the authors point out, one expects this intuitively but there is no literature documenting this. The paper provides evidence of the need for education regarding the use of blood cultures in the pre-clinical or early clinical training of physicians.

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

None

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

Some mention of the limited utility of blood cultures in specific clinical settings without septic shock (pyelonephritis, cellulitis, pneumonia) should be made in the introduction.

Page 4, paragraph 2, reference 10. This reference is a review article dealing with new diagnostic techniques without specific findings with regards the preceding statement. I would suggest referring to a chapter in a standard Internal Medicine or Infectious Diseases textbook.

Page 5 paragraph 1, reference 16. This reference deals with the use of tincture of iodine vs iodophors. The sentence refers to costs of contaminated blood cultures...do they mean reference 15.

Page seven, paragraph 3. This paragraph describes the responders to the survey. Is there data on the number that declined participation. If so this should be included (and discussed in the discussion). If large numbers of physicians declined participation there may be a bias in the data.

Page 9, last sentence. This sentence describes the fact that seven questions had marked variability in response. Since most readers will not access the additional documentation at the web site it would be prudent to describe these questions in the text.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
Title: I would use the term: A Cross Sectional Survey

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests