Reviewer’s report

Title: Surveillance recommendations based on an exploratory analysis of respiratory syncytial virus reports derived from the European Influenza Surveillance System

Version: 1 Date: 6 July 2006

Reviewer: Ann R Falsey

Reviewer’s report:

General The manuscript describes the use of the European Influenza Surveillance Scheme (EISS) to collect data on RSV infections in addition to influenza. The paper is really a pilot study on the feasibility of such an endeavor since there are many methodologic problems which the authors acknowledge that preclude any conclusions regarding the prevalence of these two viruses. The primary problems are the lack of a standardized definition for patient sampling (likely quite different for RSV and influenza) and the different diagnostic assays used. It is quite striking that the percentage of RSV infection in England was markedly higher in all age groups compared to the other 3 countries. This suggests a different in the sensitivity of the diagnostic tests. The idea has merit and the data are encouraging that this type of surveillance is possible but, given the very preliminary nature of the information, the manuscript should be shortened significantly.

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

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)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests' below