Reviewer's report

Title: Methods For Identifying Surgical Wound Infection After Discharge From Hospital: a systematic review

Version: 6  Date: 29 August 2006

Reviewer: Robert Rubin

Reviewer's report:

1. The subject of this paper is worth pursuing- the incidence and consequences of surgical wound infection. The authors have done a heroic job in reviewing the relevant data and analysis of these data. They are correct in pointing out the deficiencies in this literature. Unfortunately, they have not come up with a better approach.

2. The incidence of surgical wound infection is largely due to the interaction of the nature of the surgery; the presence of technical problems that result in devitalized tissue and/or fluid collections; the need for reexploration; the presence of blood; obesity; metabolic derangement such as protein-calorie malnutrition and diabetes; and the use of antibiotics. Since these contributory factors are so important, stratification of the data is essential.

3. Because of the importance of the subject, it should be published, but only with a perspective of how such studies should be done.