Reviewer's report

Title: A retrospective study of central nervous system shunt infections diagnosed in a university hospital during a 4-year period

Version: 1 Date: 13 September 2005

Reviewer: James van Dellen

Reviewer's report:

General

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

The message of the report would be far stronger if it concentrated on the microbiological aspects of the data available. In particular they are reporting a 'regional' higher percentage of non-staph infections and a discussion on the likely reasons for this and how this may alter the management of shunt infections would strengthen the submission. The retrospective nature of the data makes the analyses and deductions less compelling and are not in the present format significantly adding to the existing body of the 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)

There are grammatical and contextual corrections that will need to be made:
Abstract: line 1 monitoring replaced by management
Background: as above
Results: line 3 details of Medtronic need to be provided
Discussion: lines 9,10 replace 'incompetent..of' by 'insufficient to determine'
line 43 replace preliminary by predisposing
line 47 suggest move In the time..... care unit.' to after ..'intensive care unit.' in line 44.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
Abstract: line 6 inserted = insertions; 'studied..factors;' replaced by 'evaluated using:"
line 7 delete attack
line 8 delete comma after infection and insert 'features and'
line 10 myelomeningocel sp.error; delete 'most'
line 11 common = commonest
Conclusions: line 1 delete 'It...that' replace 'in' with 'In'; commas after 'antibiotics' and 'testing'
Background: line 6 insert 'reported to be' before 'associated'
line 8 insert 'not unusually' after 'requires'
Methods: line 1 delete 'made' and insert 'carried out'; insert 'a' after 'in'
line 2 assessed retrospectively should be transposed; 'inserted = 'insertions'
line 3 delete 'were....factors;' and insert 'analysed according to '....
line 4 delete 'attack'; delete comma after 'infection' and insert 'features and' after 'infection'; delete 'And also'
Results: line 1 'along' = 'in'
line 2 'shunts' = 'shunt'; insert 'a' after 'was'; 'Burr' = 'burr' and insert 'from' after 'pressure,'
line 4 '30' = 'Thirty'
line 5 '10' = 'Ten'
line 8 myelomeningocel sp.
line 9 'only in' transpose; delete 'of them' = 'was'
line 10 delete 'was'
line 13 'two-third' = 'two-thirds'; delete 'observed' = 'of the'
line 14 delete 'attacks' = 'events'; insert 'were' after 'counts'; delete 'of them.'
line 16 delete semi-colon after 'cases' and insert 'and the' after 'cases'
line 17 insert 'therapy' after 'glycopeptide.'
line 18 delete comma after 'infections'; insert 'and' after 'infections'
line 21 insert 'of' after 'because'
line 23 insert comma after '[7]'; 'The' = 'the'
line 25 'patients' = 'patient'
line 26 'myelo meningocel' sp; delete 'of the'; 'suggested' = 'suggest'; insert 'the' after 'that'
line 27 insert comma after 'however'; insert the after 'study,'; delete 'incompetent....of' = 'insufficient to determine'
line 29 'system' = 'systems'
line 31 insert 'generally after' = 'are'; comma after 'however'
line 33 insert 'the' after 'in'
line 35 insert 'have after' = 'rates'
line 38 replace 'of' by 'by'
line 39 'nonspsific' = 'non-specific'; delete '('; 'nause' = nausea'
line 55 'Despite of' = 'Contrary to'
line 61 'like' = 'such as'; insert 'treatment' after 'following'; insert 'the' after 'in'; full stop/period after 'unit'; 'colonization' = 'Colonization'
line 62 insert 'were also contributory factors.' after 'disease'
line 63 'severely' = 'also'
line 67 'antibiotic' = 'antibiotics'
line 70/71 'the others' = 'other authors'
line 74 'with' = 'as a consequence of'
line 75 'choroids' = 'choroid'
Conclusion: line 3 'take' = 'form'; significant sp.; 'part' = 'percentage'
line 4 delete 'attacks'; 'first' = 'firstly'
line 5 'technique' = 'techniques'; 'situ' = 'place'
line 6 'second' = 'secondly'
Table 1: line 4 'myelomeningocel' sp.
line 9 delete 'operation'

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: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: No
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interests.