Reviewer's report

Title: Nosocomial candidaemia in cancer patients: are all patients the same?

Version: 1 Date: 2 December 2005

Reviewer: Marcio Nucci

Reviewer’s report:

General
This is a retrospective analysis of characteristics of candidemia in patients with solid tumors and hematologic malignancies. As stated by the authors, this distinction is important and has not been well addressed. The paper is well written and provides useful information.

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

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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)

Why did the authors include only nosocomially acquired candidemia? How many “community-acquired” candidemias were diagnosed during the study period? Cancer patients (especially those with hematologic malignancies) who have a catheter and are admitted and readmitted to receive courses of chemotherapy are at increased risk to develop candidemia. Even if candidemia is diagnosed at admission, these episodes should not be considered "community-acquired".

The last paragraph of Results seems to have been truncated. The authors should expand the description of the differences between the two groups, including those that were significant.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

As stated by the authors in the last paragraph of the discussion, further studies are needed to better characterize the risks and epidemiology of candidemia in patients with solid tumor. Some variables that could be explored include complications of surgery (duration of surgery) and site of the tumor. The comment that non-albicans species predominate in oncology patients because of the use of fluconazole is simplistic. For example, C. tropicalis has been associated with cancer (especially neutropenia and mucositis) long before the introduction of fluconazol in clinical practice; C. parapsilosis has emerged in cancer patients possibly as a result of the widespread use of catheters. The authors should comment on these other factors.

Please comment why multivariate analysis was not performed

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