Reviewer's report

Title: Empirical use of antibiotics and adjustment of empirical antibiotic therapies in a university hospital: a prospective observational study

Version: 3 Date: 7 December 2006

Reviewer: Ronald Andrew Seaton

Reviewer's report:

General
I remain confused on re-reading whether all of those who had received antibiotics as outpatients were really excluded since about 70% of admissions were seen by GPs prior to admission. I presume an attempt would have been made by GPs to Rx the infection prior to admission! In short we need to know whether a course of antibiotics in the community followed by inpatient antibiotics meant this group was excluded? I suspect the authors mean that if patients were admitted with an infection which required admission because of "outpatient antibiotic failure" they were still included.

eg 1. Patient with exacerbation of COPD treated with oral amoxicillin by GP..admitted due to worsening dyspnoea and fever; given IV Coamoxiclav in hospital..??Included

2. Patient on flucloxacillin for suspected cellulitis, admitted to exclude DVT. Flucloxacillin continued as IP...??Excluded

Do you see what I mean?
This should be a very simple point to clarify.

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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)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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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: Yes

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