Reviewer's report

Title: Trends of Hepatitis A Hospitalization and Risk Factors in Canada Between 1990 and 2003

Version: 2 Date: 5 September 2006

Reviewer: Alfonso Mele

Reviewer's report:

General
The study describes the epidemiology of hepatitis A virus (HAV) in the province of Quebec using an administrative database of hospitalization MED-ECHO and the Provincial Notifiable Disease Database (MADO). The objective is to obtain a picture of the burden of the disease in Canada. The paper has limited interest since gives information on HAV epidemiology in an area of North America without anything new.

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)

ADDITIONAL POINTS
1. Case validation: not laboratory confirmed acute cases with reporting travel to hepatitis A endemic countries were classified as HAV acute cases. Did these cases have performed HBV test?
2. Which clinical events were considered for fulminant hepatitis?

RESULTS
The Results section should be shortened and the reading simplified. For example:
–second paragraph:
the diagnosis of hepatitis A was confirmed in 11 out of 49 (22%) died patients but the death was attributable to hepatitis A virus only in 10 of them (8 laboratory confirmed).
–third paragraph:
182 out of 524 (35%) patients of random sample had hepatitis A virus (157 laboratory confirmed).

DISCUSSION
The generalizability of the results of the present study to all countries should be discussed.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

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