Reviewer's report

Title: Nasal Carriage of a Common Clone of Community-Acquired Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus among Kindergarten Attendees in Northern Taiwan

Version: 1 Date: 10 April 2007

Reviewer: Linda K McDougal

Reviewer's report:

General
This study described a high nasal colonization (13.2%) of a single, phenotypically unique MRSA clone among "well" kindergarten attendees in Northern Taiwan.

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

Because the carriage rate was unusually high and clustered predominently within one age group, were the parents of the participants questioned about any history of skin infections (spider bites?) during the previous 12 months? This was not mentioned as a risk factor.

Although the prevalence of ermB in S. aureus is rare, it was also reported in an on-going colonization study in children by the same authors (ref. 7). These isolates were MLST 59 and PVL positive. Although the isolates in this study were PVL negative, the PFGE patterns appear visibly to be similar. Were the PFGE patterns of the 9 (there appears to be only a 2 band difference between pattern B and pattern A)related MRSA isolates in this study compared to the patterns of the isolates in reference 7? If the isolates do not appear related by PFGE (>80 similarity), then MLST should be determined on one of the isolates in this study.

Is there data for the authors to speculate on the increased risk for CA-MRSA infection resulting from the high colonization rate of this PVL negative strain compared to the PVL positive isolates in the on-gong community study?

Page 13. MLS resistance and ermA is consistent with SCCmecII and SCCmecII in HA-MRSA. MLS resistance and plasmid mediated ermC has been reported in CA-MRSA strains i.e., USA300 (ST8).

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Page 6, line 9: one-half hour
Page 14, line 2: the 8 patterns were not indistinguishable by PFGE, but differed by 1 to 2 bands.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

I would change last sentence page 3. All of the colonization isolates carried the staphylococcal cassette chromosome mec (SCCmec) type IV, but none were positive for the Panton-Valentine leukocidin (PVL) genes.

Title: change “common” to single.

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 importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.