Reviewer's report

Title: Short-term and one-year outcome of infective endocarditis in adult patients treated in a Finnish teaching hospital during 1980-2004

Version: Date: 19 February 2007

Reviewer: Peter AP Wilson

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a retrospective study of a large number of endocarditis cases at a teaching hospital. The weakness of such studies is the completeness of collection of information of factors only decided at a later date. There have been a number of studies of risk factors in endocarditis. However endocarditis is a rare disease and prospective studies are very difficult to manage. Therefore retrospective studies are often the only means to highlight issues. The main finding was a relationship between the CRP and outcome.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
The tables do not clearly indicate the number of cases with missing information. This is essential to decide the reliability of the data, especially outpatient follow up. Some factors e.g. CRP method are bound to have changed during the period of study. How have such changes affected the results. P values of 0.05 were used whereas 0.01 may be more appropriate in multiple comparisons. The completeness of follow up at 6 months and one year needs to be better described. The finding that the need for surgery was independent of the organism is perhaps surprising as S. aureus is usually assumed to result in earlier surgery. Was the lower rates of surgery in patients with high ESR or CRP related to early death?

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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)
The discussion is too long and should be shortened by one third. Please rephrase ‘significantly dependent of’

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory 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, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

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