Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of routinely reported surgical site infections against microbiological culture results: a tool to identify patient groups where diagnosis and treatment may be improved.

Version: 1 Date: 24 June 2009

Reviewer: Didier Lepelletier

Reviewer's report:

Krukerink et al describe the evaluation of routinely reported surgical site infections against microbiological culture results: a tool to identify patient groups where diagnosis and treatment may be improved. They previously published articles in the field of SSI reporting quality improvement and medical decision making in 2005.

This manuscript must be revised according to the following comments. It is not suitable for publication in the present form.1. Background paragraph: Figure 1 and reference 8 (unpublished data) can be deleted. Tables and figures must be supported by data analysis from the present study.2. What was the criteria to include or exclude patients with several and different surgeries within the first operation?3. The duration of survey after discharge in patients with surgery including prosthetic material is not describe. Please, add information.4. Some comments in the Results paragraph must be replaced in the Discussion paragraph: "this can be expected if the reason ....." or "A possible reason for the perceived change in antibiotic policy.....".5. Authors used a previously published classification (10). This classification does not include superficial or deep SSI criteria. Those criteria should be helpful to understand the present results. SSI without culture were probably superficial SSI (and less severe SSI). Culture (to diagnose the SSI) and antibiotic use (to cure the patient) are not always needed for superficial SSI. Systematic culture policy for superficial SSI microbiological diagnosis can increased antibiotic use. Authors should answer to the question: What was the impact of the culture on superficial SSI treatment and on morbidity (re-hospitalization, re-operation)?6. Table 1: Authors should explain the less severe SSI definition (bottom of the table).

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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 have no competing interests