Reviewer’s report

Title: Mycoplasma pneumoniae pneumonia revisited within the German Competence Network for Community-acquired pneumonia (CAPNETZ)

Version: 1 Date: 18 November 2008

Reviewer: Lionel Mandell

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1. What percentage of patients had received antibiotics prior to admission? This could certainly have affected the clinical presentation as well as possibly PCR and IgM responses depending upon the antibiotic given.

2. While some of the Mycoplasma cases were identified on the basis of PCR, others were identified solely on the basis of a positive IgM test in the acute phase. There is considerable controversy surrounding the use of serology and the authors need to carefully address this.

3. Table 1 is far too long. Also, when looking at all these variables, there was no attempt made to correct for multiple statistical testing e.g., the Bonferroni correction.

4. Are the authors arguing that if they knew if a patient had Mycoplasma as the sole etiologic agent and the pneumonia was not severe that they would not treat it? This needs to be made very clear. They also need to come out with some specific suggestions about how they would in fact handle such patients.

5. In the last 2 lines of the second paragraph on page 15 the authors state that “dual coverage in ambulatory patients of increased risk seems highly questionable and should be revised”. This is a blanket statement which in fact is completely inaccurate. In fact the recent IDSA/ATS guidelines divide the outpatients (80% of CAP) into 3 categories. Dual coverage is not routinely recommended in these various categories. Also, it should be kept in mind that the IDSA/ATS guidelines were written specifically for the United States and not for European countries.

6. In the first paragraph of the discussion, the authors state that “patients with MPP are characterized by quite specific clinical pattern”. Can the authors comment on why it is that much of the earlier literature could not find any correlation between clinical presentation and the type of pathogen?

7. I think that the authors have overstated their conclusions in terms of treatment suggestions. I’m not sure their conclusions are justified based on their data and they certainly aren’t justified vis-à-vis the IDSA/ATS guidelines which were never meant to be used in Germany.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.