Reviewer's report

Title: The Swimmer's view - Does it really show what it is supposed to show? A retrospective study

Version: 1 Date: 29 September 2007

Reviewer: Patrick Platzer

Reviewer's report:

General:

The article is well written, has relevance for clinical science and definitely merits consideration for publication in BMC Medical Imaging. However, certain revisions have to be made prior to acceptance (as listed below).

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

1): The manuscript appears to be very short, particularly the 'Results / Discussion' section. Although the BMC Medical Imaging leaves it to the authors to combine or to separate results and discussion, I would advice you to divide it.

2): Referring to the Results section, please provide an additional Table which shows how many radiographs were classified adequate / inadequate, which criteria for adequacy were failed and the reasons for the inadequacy. Within the text you should provide the percentages (at least in bracket)

You should also address, how many of the examined patients had an isolated trauma of the cervical spine or major concomitant injuries.

3): In cervical spine assessment, it is also important to distinguish between the isolated cervical spine trauma in awake and responsive patients and the cervical spine trauma in critically injured or comatose patients. You have to discuss the differences and the use of the Swimmer's views in both patients' groups in the discussion.

4): In the Methods section you state that the radiographs were selected randomly. Did you use any inclusion or exclusion criteria? Please provide these criteria or give an explanation of 'randomly selected'.

5): In the majority of corresponding articles a single lateral view is not considered as 'gold standard' for initial evaluation of the cervical spine. The Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) guidelines, for example, recommend removing cervical spine precautions after clearing the cervical spine with a normal three-view cervical spine series and without clinical evidence of spinal cord injuries. The Eastern Association for the Surgery of trauma (EAST) proposes removal of the cervical collar, if adequate three-view radiographs and CT-scan of
C1 and C2 are normal.

If you use this statement ('Lateral cervical Spine Radiograph is the gold standard initial radiographic assessment . . .'), you have to give at least one reference. You should also provide a reference for the statement ('The Swimmer's view is the preferred additional view when . . .').

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

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 of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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.