Reviewer's report

Title: Regional Variation in Hospitalization for Stroke among Asians/Pacific Islanders in the United States: a Nationwide Retrospective Cohort Study

Version: 1 Date: 24 March 2005

Reviewer: Michael Hill

Reviewer's report:

General

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

1. The paper describes an assessment of the incidence of stroke by racial profile focusing on Asians-Pacific Islanders according to stroke type. It is a nice example of the use of administrative data for this kind of passive surveillance of stroke.

2. The authors have presented age-adjusted incidence rates using direct standardization. Given that gender is an important determinant of stroke, particularly SAH, and that there are notable gender differences in stroke in the population studied, it would make sense to provide either age-adjusted incidence rates by gender or age and gender-adjusted incidence rates. While I suspect that this will not substantially change your conclusions, gender differences are an increasingly important consideration in cerebro- and cardio-vascular research.

3. Could you clarify whether you used ICD9 codes 437 and 438? The methods on page 5 are unclear. If you did, please recalculate without them. These codes are not helpful in defining an acute stroke admission.

4. In Table 2, does "Whites" imply "non-Hispanic Whites" as in Table 1 or something different? Please clarify.

5. I would favour deleting Table 3. You are simply demonstrating that the unadjusted comparisons are confounded by co-morbid illness. This can be stated in the text.

6. There are startling differences in IR by region among the API group. Could you prepare a table showing differences among API patient characteristics by region? This might help assure that given the data you have, there is no explanation and that the conclusion that differences may be due to residual confounding by subcategory of ethnicity makes sense. Within the database you have, is there a further breakdown of ethnicity? Is Asian broken down into Japanese, Korean etc. to support your hypothesis?

Thanks.

Michael D. Hill

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: No

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