Reviewer’s report

Title: Thalamic haemorrhage: clinical profile and predictors of in-hospital mortality

Version: 1 Date: 5 July 2007

Reviewer: Azman Ali Raymond

Reviewer’s report:

General
1) This is a retrospective review from a single hospital of patients with either a thalamic or internal capsule-basal ganglia haemorrhage. This paper has generally been well written and the subject matter is of interest to all clinicians involved with stroke management.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1) The title of the paper and the abstract, particularly the part concerning the background, do not reflect what the authors actually did in their retrospective review. They actually "assessed differential features in aetiology, risk factors, etc, between the cohorts of patients with thalamic haemorrhage and internal capsule-basal ganglia haemorrhage" (2nd paragraph p. 4). An appropriate title might be "Thalamic haemorrhage vs. internal capsule-basal ganglia haemorrhage: clinical profile and predictors of in-hospital mortality".

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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)
1) In the conclusion of both the abstract and page 9, "one of each 10 patients" should read "one in every 10 patients", or simply "one in ten patients".
2) In the second line of the "background" on page 3, "independently" should read "independent".
3) Seven lines from the bottom of page 4, "scan" in "brain CT scan" should be omitted because "tomogram" and "scan" are synonymous.
4) On page 5, second line, ".ththalamic haemorrhage with those of patients with.." should read ".ththalamic haemorrhage and those with.."
5) In the 3rd paragraph on page 6, "History of chronic...were significantly.." should read "History of chronic...was significantly".
6) In the first paragraph on page 7, the statement ".a percentage in the range between 6% in the series of..., or 8.8% in the series of..." is vague and confusing; do these figures refer to the prevalence of thalamic haemorrhage among all
cases of stroke, or among intracerebral haemorrhages only? I suggest that whatever these figures refer to, the authors should create a new sentence and state that the reported frequencies of isolated thalamic haemorrhages vary widely, from 8.8% in the series of ...to 25.6% in the series of...

7) In the last line of paragraph 3 on page 7, "hemorrhages" should read "haemorrhages".

8) In the second line of paragraph 4 on page 7, "..3 of which presenting a pure sensory.." should read "..3 of whom presenting with a pure sensory.."

9) In the last paragraph on page 7, "On the other hand, none of the patients...stroke. In contrast, a lacunar syndrome.." should read "Whereas none of the patients...stroke, a lacunar syndrome.."

10) On page 8 (first line), "consisted" should read "consistent", and in the third line, "a" should appear before "small haematoma".

11) The first sentence of the second paragraph on page 8 is somewhat long-winded and perhaps can be rewritten as "Thalamic haemorrhage is a severe clinical condition with an in-hospital mortality rate, in the present study, of 19%, and only one patient (2.1%) was symptom-free at discharge". In the next sentence, it is not clear whether the 17% by Mori et al. and 37% by Chung et al. refer to in-hospital or 6-month mortality rates?

12) In the last sentence of the same paragraph on page 8, "advanced age" rather than "age" were independent predictors...

13) In the 7th line of the 3rd paragraph on page 8, "..with of the Steinke et al. [25] that found.." should read "..with that of Steinke et al. [25] who found.."

14) There are a few errors in the references:

a) The volume number is missing from reference no. 6 Arboix A, Avlarez-Sabin J...

b) Reference no. 25 is incomplete; only the names of the authors have been stated.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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 declare that I have no competing interests