Reviewer's report

Title: Multiple Causes for Delay in Arrival at Hospital in Acute Stroke Patients in Aydin, Turkey

Version: 1 Date: 25 September 2007

Reviewer: Dexter Morris

Reviewer's report:

General
The authors describe a small study of pre hospital delay in stroke patients in Turkey. This study does not provide any new information about delay seeking behavior for stroke per say, but does provide useful information about delay and care in Turkey, which, as the authors suggest, may be useful in improving stroke healthcare in that region. The numbers are small and the response rate was low, however, it is reassuring that the authors findings, to a large extent, match previous studies of delay.

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

1. The authors need to state how they calculated delay for those subjects who reported awakening with symptoms. Most studies use the last known time the subject was symptom free (ie when they went to bed) as the symptom onset time. If this was not done for this study, this may somewhat explain the high rate of subjects arriving in under 3 hours compared to other studies. In either case, it would be important to state how this was handled.

2. The authors present reason for delay in only subjects arriving in over three hours. It would be more appropriate to list data for the total group and then show the data for the two groups <3 hours and >three hours. It is important to try and reduce delay in all subjects. Even subjects arriving at hour 2:45 are unlikely to have enough time to be evaluated for tPA and get drug in under 3 hours.

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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. The following sentence (page 5 paragraph 1) is incomplete.
   "Patients who arrived within 3 hours of onset of symptoms came by ambulance (%) or private vehicle (%) (χ2=5.697, p<0.05)"

2. The following sentence (page 6 bottom of page) needs so correction for English.
   "In Aydin study, there was no any question ask about reasons of this low
percentage.”

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. It would be useful to state, if possible, why there was such a low participation rate. Was it partially because all the patients could not be contacted or was it that they mostly refused. Why did they refuse if known? For simple questionnaire like this the participation rate is usually higher.

2. There was a rather high percentage of subjects who arrived within 3 hours. While the authors comment on this some, the fact that there is little traffic does not seem like a good explanation. It would be useful for the authors to comment on other possible causes such as; could there have been bias in consent rate, so that more people with shorter times consented?, is it possible that in Turkey, in fact people do respond quicker to stroke symptoms, was there possibly a bias that people responded to please the examiners?, other thoughts the authors have about why this rate is high

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: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I work for GlaxoSmithKline which is interested in the area of stroke however has no current ongoing stroke trials. In any case, I or the organization would not gain or lose financially by publication or lack of publication of this article.