Reviewer's report

Title: Ischemic stroke incidence in Santa Coloma de Gramenet (ISISCOG), Spain. A community-based study.

Version: 1 Date: 19 September 2007

Reviewer: Antonio Carolei

Reviewer's report:

General
Authors evaluated in a prospective community-based register and in a 1-year period the incidence of ischemic stroke, case fatality, and disability at 90 days. They found a rather uncommon low incidence of stroke, low case-fatality at 90 days and a low number of recurrences.

This kind of studies is rather common. They are performed in order to obtain reliable data on the incidence and prognosis of the different stroke types. However, Authors limit their investigation to ischemic stroke. The inclusion of SAH, hemorrhagic stroke, and of ill-defined strokes might have rendered comparisons with other studies more easy and anyhow their study more community than hospital-based

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

The methods are not fully appropriate. Data are not fully representative. The Discussion and the conclusions are not well balanced and fully supported by the data. The title should be shortened.

The following should also be taken into account:

- Authors assert to have followed the criteria for the ideal stroke incidence study but this is not true in terms of standard diagnostic criteria and complete case ascertainment. Besides, they do not report the latest paper that has been published on this topic in The Lancet (2004;363:1920).

- The resident population is represented by an equal number of men and women; this result is rather uncommon and should be commented also with reference to the different age groups.

- Codes of the ICD-9 Classification should have been reported, at least for the ischemic events (433-434, 435, and 436-437). Definitions of stroke types and particularly of cerebral infarction should be given.

- The case-finding procedure should be described with more details giving due information on death certificates under this heading. - Data collection methods and the existence of a database should be mentioned.

- Statistical analyses need to be fully described together with the methods used.
The software used for the analyses should also be reported.
- A figure referring to the age-and sex-specific incidence rates for first-ever stroke should be added.
- The European population needs to be clarified as pertaining to a specific calendar year.
- The Results and the Discussion should be reorganized according to the above reported issues and due consideration should be given to comparisons with other registers.

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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)

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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: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests