Title: Difference of clinical features in childhood Mycoplasma pneumoniae pneumonia

Version: 2 Date: 22 January 2010

Reviewer: Mark Neuman

Reviewer's report:

The authors performed a retrospective cohort study of children hospitalized with community acquired pneumonia due to mycoplasma pneumoniae. The study was conducted at a single center, over a two year period during an outbreak of mycoplasma pneumoniae. Clinical, laboratory, and radiographic patterns of disease were compared among different age groups.

Overall, this is well-written manuscript. The authors should describe in discussion section the implications for their findings. How might this help a clinician evaluating a child with possible mycoplasma pneumoniae pneumonia.

The authors should state in discussion, and site as potential limitation the fact that this study was conducted during an epidemic. They should describe how these results may be generalizable to non-epidemic disease patterns.

mycoplasma pneumoniae mis-spelled throughout entire manuscript

Specific comments:

Page 3, paragraph 3. 1st sentence is not clear.

Page 4 (methods): If this was a retrospective study, how was it required that patients had serology drawn at time of hospitalization and at a second point in time, and why/how was consent obtained. This sounds more like a retrospective review of patients enrolled in a prospective study. If this is this case, it should be clearly stated in methods. If not, must address consent, and standardized lab testing. Similarly, I find it hard to believe that blood culture obtained in all patients as part of routine care, considering the low yield of blood culture.

Page 5: Why use pediatrician rather that 3 radiologist to characterize and classify pneumonia patterns.

How were age categories selected. Any prior research defining these age categories

Page 6:

Statistical analyses: Why do the authors state that a p value < 0.05 was significant for non-parametric tests. These seems contradictory to prior paragraph stating that t-test were performed, implying that data were normally distributed. If this is true, then these are parametric tests for normally distributed
data. Authors need to clarify.

Page 6: All patients had abnormal breath sounds on auscultation at time of admission. Again, very surprising- warrants clarification.

Page 8: para on clinical and lab findings. 
This paragraph is particularly poorly written and requires editing.

Page 9 (discussion) 
Paragraph 1- should state at end of this paragraph that this study was limited to hospitalized children. 
Paragraph 2- take out ref to table 1. Should not be in discussion section. Same on page 10. 
Paragraph 3- sentence 1. Should say perform, not performed

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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:
No competing interests