Reviewer's report

**Title:** Suture restriction of the temporal bone as a risk factor for acute otitis media in children: cohort study

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 9 September 2012

**Reviewer:** Kari J Kvaerner

**Reviewer's report:**

Major comments. Although the study is very interesting and of importance, I am sceptical to the use of ears as measuring unit and not child. It is well known that the heritability of OM is considerable, correspondingly it is difficult to control for such biases. I suggest the authors change their dependent variable to OM in children; n = 64. Another reason is since no specific criteria are used for the physician diagnosis of AOM. I hope the power calculations allow for the latter.

Minor essential revisions.

1. I suggest the authors focus on temporal bone results and leave out pacifier use and age, since the latter probably represents a confounder and pacifier use cannot be concluded upon based on a selected clinical sample.

2. Bias should be more thoroughly discussed, since a major weakness is the lack of standardization when population was recruited. In particular, what would the effect of a non-validated method for temporal bone... And non-specific OM diagnosis mean in terms of misclassification bias?

3. I suggest to shorten the introduction and focus only on temporal bone and ET information. Further, shorten method section and focus the discussion

4. Table 2 and 4 can be left out and cited in text only, tb 3 shortened

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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.