Reviewer's report

Title: Pediatric gastroenteritis in the emergency department: Practice evaluation in Belgium, France, The Netherlands and Switzerland.

Version: 1 Date: 13 February 2014

Reviewer: José M M Quintillá

Reviewer's report:

The study is interesting in that it attempts to reflect what is the current practice in the management of GEA and dehydration, looking for differences between countries. There are previous studies that analyse the clinical decisions of professionals in the management of rehydration, but this study provides in addition a differential analysis between several European countries. Its main limitation is the sample size, determined by the number of responses.

The article shows in general an adequate coherence between objectives, description of the methodology used, results and comments. Study limitations are well expressed.

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

1. It is necessary to include the full text of the survey, even as an appendix. The reader needs to know on what terms the questions were formulated to respondent physicians to judge the quality of the survey, and therefore the validity of the results.

2. Confidence intervals of proportions are not specified, so no idea of the accuracy of the results is given.

3. The selection of an adequate and representative sample of the population under study is essential to ensure the validity of a survey. It is not specified how people were selected from each center. Does the study also included residents in training or only qualified pediatricians? All of them were pediatricians or also family physicians were included?

4. It is not specified how many surveys were sent to each center.

5. In the case of intravenous fluid types, the results are only expressed in absolute numbers but not in percentage. Since this information is not included on the table and the fields of the survey were not mandatory, it is impossible to know the proportion of respondents who answered a particular option.

6. The volume of fluid administered is expressed in range, but no measure of central tendency (such as the median) is provided.

7. It is not understood why etiologic studies appear in the table only "in case of oral rehydration failure." These studies were only asked on the survey in this case? It is not understood what is the relationship between management of
dehydration and indication of microbiological studies.

8. The table and the text do not express the level of significance of the results, except in some data. Is it supposed that all other differences between countries were not statistically significant? You must add a column to the table with the value of p.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

9. The level of experience of the respondents to the survey is not specified. It would be interesting to know (although the small sample size makes it difficult) if there were differences in management between senior and junior pediatricians.

10. Laboratory Tests: It would be good to express in the body of the text if the indication of blood tests was asked only in case of oral rehydration failure, as seems to be interpreted reading the table.

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 declare that I have no competing interests