Reviewer's report

Title: High burden of otitis media in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children and otitis media in Aboriginal children predicted by failed otoacoustic emissions: a birth cohort study in an arid zone of Western Australia

Version: 1 Date: 8 February 2008

Reviewer: Brian Westerberg

Reviewer's report:

The reviewed article was informative and well written. The authors study addresses an important issue in hearing health care, namely the differences in prevalence of ear disease across different peoples.

Following are specific comments:

â€¢ Major Compulsory Revisions
1. How were children otherwise included or excluded? Please specifically state inclusion and exclusion criteria even if they are detailed in the referenced previous paper.
2. The authors should speculate on the reason for the differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children. For instance, is this likely due to living conditions, or are living conditions comparable between the two groups?

â€¢ Minor Essential Revisions
3. A Table or graph showing number of children seen at each visit time after birth would be helpful, rather than or in addition to Table 1 showing the number of visits per child.
4. Clarify as to whether the TEOAEs were automated or if they required interpretation. If interpretation was required, who did the interpretation?

â€¢ Discretionary Revisions
5. What impact did the lack of an audiologist after the first year of the study have on the methodology and results?
6. Introduction within the Conclusions section of the possible use of multifrequency tympanometry in children should be prefixed with further elaboration of the limitations of low-frequency tympanometry in the Discussions section.
7. Figures are not labeled.

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 declare that I have no competing interests.