Reviewer's report

Title: Care for Amish and Mennonite Children with Cystic Fibrosis; A Case Series

Version: 1 Date: 13 October 2008

Reviewer: Heng Wang

Reviewer's report:

The Old Order Amish and Old Order Mennonites often face enormous challenges in the world of modern medicine, particularly for the families affected with certain genetic conditions such as cystic fibrosis. As health professionals, it is important to understand their culture and religion, and to work with them in order to overcome the obstacles they have in seeking the medical service they need. Without doubt, there is a clear need for studies in this area as there are hardly ever reports in the literature. This manuscript attempts to address this issue. Methodologically, a well designed survey would provide more useful information on this issue. A case series as presented here, may not be the ideal study method, however, it may give some direct hints for clinicians who have little or no experience in working with plain communities, especially those working in major academic medical centers. The experiences of both patient B and C in different centers described in the manuscript indicated how culturally sensitive care can change patients’ outcomes.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) Although it may be true that more and more children in Old Order Amish and Mennonite communities are receiving vaccinations, “their willingness to allow preventive measures” seems beyond the scope of discussion of this manuscript. It is a fairly complex issue. In fact, the family of patient C might have considered the influenza vaccine as a part of standard therapy for cystic fibrosis in the Center. It seems more rational if the authors focus their discussion on how they delivered culturally sensitive medical services and how these approaches have changed patients’ outcomes. To include some information from the other nine Amish and Mennonite patients from the authors’ center in the discussion may make this manuscript convincing.

2) The tone of the third paragraph in patient A “Although Patient A’s CF lung disease improved with …” did not appear consistent with the paragraph following. This paragraph might be omitted as it could confuse readers.

Minor Essential Revisions

3) If patient A has one older sister suffering from cystic fibrosis and his parents asked if the disease would be painful when they had a second child with the same condition as described in the manuscript, something was missing here.
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