Reviewer’s report

Title: Health-seeking behaviour and clinical characteristics of human brucellosis cases in rural Tanzania

Version: 1 Date: 26 January 2007

Reviewer: stephen wright

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General
1. The nature of the study - I wasn't sure if it was prospective or retrospective - the authors do not specigfically say though they imply it is prospective.

2. Their list of symptoms for suspect cases was very all-inclusive

3. Detailed data - I wondered if this was from a proforma that all hospital personnel filled in - it would have taken a long time to complete all the items they include because febrile patients probably comprise such a large proportion of their cases

4. I thought that the patients with positive Ropse Bengal PlateTests gave a group of patients (Brucella seropositives) with a diagnosis of brucellosis separate from the suspect cases who then had an ELISA done

5. I did not see any reference to the duration of the study

6. I was not certain if the brucella seropositive cases were analysed further or were only the suspecty brucella cases analysed or were the all the cases analysed together?

7. n-2230 but the cases analysed were 1153 - how were these p[atients excluded from further study? we are not told.

8. 98 of 1186 cases seropositive by ELISA 6.2%

9. Effects of del;ay in iagnosis fairly uniform rate of diagnosis over 49 cases over <30 days to > 1 year Effec of low awareness perhaps

Opinion: This is a useful paper in that it is bvgining awareness of brucellosis to an area where it is not readily recognised. There are relatively few papers abouty brucellosis from Africa in contrast to the alrge numbers from the middle East and Turkey so that thge authors should persvere. There are a number of points noted above that require attention in the text.

I would ask them to revise the paper in the light of these commments and resubmit without any undertaking to publish or suggset they note these queries and seek to publish in a local journal.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)