Reviewer's report

Title: Nonattendance in Pediatric Pulmonary Clinics: An Ambulatory Survey

Version: 2 Date: 20 January 2009

Reviewer: Martyn R. Partridge

Reviewer's report:

This is a report of an interesting study previously refereed by two others. Whilst the originally submitted paper was not easily available to me the other referees' comments and the authors' responses have been reviewed by myself. The paper reviews the reasons for patients/parents' nonattendance in a paediatric pulmonary clinic and concludes that certain patient characteristics and certain appointment characteristics influence attendance.

The conclusions from all of the published studies in this area seem to be incredibly diverse. It is not therefore easy to extrapolate studies in children to studies in adults and it seems as though different ethnic groups might behave in different ways. Different conditions (illnesses) may also influence patient behaviour and I think that one could therefore argue that some form of study needs to be undertaken for each speciality in each geographical area for a range of patient ages. I think that the paper could introduce that possibility into the discussion and the authors might either wish to support or refute it.

Minor Comments

1) The new insertion in red in the abstract is mumbo jumbo. I think what it is saying is 'we postulated that the reasons for nonattendance and the necessary solutions might be different in respiratory medicine than in a non respiratory paediatric population. We therefore investigated the factors concerned in order to devise a corrective strategy.'

2) There are a number of spelling mistakes (e.g. except not expect and examples of where the plural form rather than the singular form is used).

3) Are the authors recommending an optimal time from referral to appointment?

4) I am sure a reference should be made to the problems of health literacy – do we know that each of these sub groups can read the letters containing their appointment times.

5) The comment regarding confidentiality and telephone reminders is, with respect, nonsense. If somebody has given you their phone number they must appreciate that one might use it and one has to assume that health staff when phoning utilise common sense and there are of course ways in which one can be certain that one is speaking to the right person by example by the use of passwords. Confidentiality is no more likely to be breached by use of the telephone used in the proper way than by a letter which might be misaddressed.
or delivered to the wrong place, or opened by a flat mate.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no competing interests