Reviewer’s report

Title: Obliteration of radical cavities with autogenous cortical bone; long-term results

Version: 3 Date: 6 June 2008

Reviewer: Patrick J Dawes

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Obliteration of Radical Cavities with autologous cortical bone.

Authors: AM Abdel-Rahman et al.

This review was prepared according to the guidelines offered by BMC ear, nose and throat disorders.

Question 1 - Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?

The question answered by the authors is:

What is the long term outcome following canal wall down mastoidectomy with epitympanic and mastoid obliteration: consideration of cavity condition and hearing.

The question posed is:

We have studied the durability of autogenous obliteration material and the mucoperiosteal flap in the long term.

I would prefer to read:

We have studied the long term condition of ears that underwent canal wall down mastoidectomy with mastoid and epitympanic obliteration using autogenous bone chips and a mucoperiosteal flap.

Question 2 - Are the methods appropriate and well described?

Yes

Question 3 – Are the data sound?

Yes for the patients assessed.

Note

Results, para 2, line 4 and 5: says we evaluated all the all the CDW operations etc. This is potentially misleading as the authors have examined 70 out of 133 procedures done.

This sentence should read…Of the patients we evaluated between 1986 and
1991 all were aimed to be single stage surgeries.

Note: almost half the patients were not included. There is a lot of missing data and this may have altered the outcome. It is necessary to state that there are limitations because of this.

Question 4 - Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes

Question 5 - Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequate supported by the data?

On page 9, para 3, line 3:.....However, some resorption of bone does occur.

This sentence is not supported by the data. Tympanometry and examination of the cavity was performed once, 18 years after the surgery. There is no prior tympanometry or examination reported so the authors cannot say that their cavities enlarged, albeit on average only a little bit. What they can say is that most of the cavities were small and predominantly trouble free.

Question 6 –Are the limitations of the work clearly stated?
The limited number of patients included is stated in the discussion. The reader will draw their own conclusions.

Question 7 – Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building?
Not relevant

Question 8 Do the title and abstract adequately convey what has been found?
Yes

Question 7 - Is the writing acceptable?
Yes

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

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

As per questions 1, 3 and 5 above.
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Question 6

**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