Reviewer’s report

Title: Syndromic Oral Clefts with Associated Anomalies: Findings in the Hungarian Congenital Abnormality Registry

Version: 3 Date: 30 May 2005

Reviewer: Peter Mossey

Reviewer’s report:

General

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

Reviewers Report

Oral Clefts with Associated Anomalies:
Findings in the Hungarian Congenital Abnormality Registry

With regard to the revisions that the authors have carried out, I think that the manuscript is indeed much improved with greater clarity and transparency throughout, and my comments below refer to a few relatively minor issues still outstanding.

Firstly, I note that the title has been altered slightly to include syndromic, and I am not sure that this is strictly correct, and the original title was probably more correct considering the literal translation of syndromic. My recommendation would be either to retain the original or alternatively use the title Syndromic Oral Clefts: Findings in the Hungarian Congenital Abnormality Registry. However I will leave the final decision on this to the authors.

I recommended that the second sentence in the background stated that the reported prevalence is more correct and should be inserted. While the Tolarova and Cervenka (1998) study is now included in the bibliography, there is no mention of the classification system used in the paper, and I think that a comment on this would be useful and very much in context.

I note the comparison with the Stoll (2000) paper has been dropped, and while I agree that this comparison was fraught with difficulties, comparison between multiple datasets where good detail on methodology exists would potentially be a very useful exercise.

Schisis Association: This condition described in the paper is extremely interesting, relatively common and yet is not a universally used descriptor. I think that this deserves more attention in the paper and perhaps even a table?

Conclusions: this paragraph on conclusions is much improved, but for this manuscript to be a useful contribution to the literature a list of recommendations based on the deficiencies picked up by this study would be extremely useful e.g. something along the lines of:

a) improved systems for birth defects ascertainment.
b) standardised definitions and classifications of birth defects.
c) improvement in diagnostic tools.
d) experienced dysmorphologists.
e) utilisation of photography to assist with diagnosis, and use of an electronic patient record.
f) engage with the large multinational registries (and for craniofacial anomalies the WHO).

Something along these lines would be a good way of summarising, concluding and beginning the process of raising awareness in birth defects surveillance.

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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)
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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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

Declaration of competing interests:
No competing interests