Reviewer's report

Title: Improving antibiotic prescribing for adults with community acquired pneumonia: does a computerised decision support system achieve more than academic detailing alone? a time series analysis

Version: 1 Date: 23 March 2008

Reviewer: Leonard Leibovici

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The record is clearly written, and the data well analysed and described. Being involved myself in the making and trial of decision support systems (DSSs), a few questions are of interest – I’m not sure all of them can be answered.

1. When implementing a DSS and measuring results, do we need written informed consent from patients? How did the local ethics research board address this question?
2. Do you know for how many patients was the system actually used?
3. What was the percentage of concordance between the recommendations of the system and the physician’s prescription?
4. Do you have data on appropriateness of treatment in patients with a pathogen that was identified?
5. Were outcomes that are relevant to the patient (beside a fatal outcome, which is described, e.g. side-effects of drugs, complications, length of stay) affected?
6. A short description (maybe as an appendix) of the system would be interesting: What was the duration of the interaction with the system for one patient? What kind of interface did you use? How many screens did the user navigate? What was the logic of the navigation?
7. How much effort is required to install and maintain the system? To teach its use?

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 have no competing interests.