Reviewer’s report

Title: A Danish population-based cohort study of newly diagnosed asthmatic children’s care pathway - adherence to guidelines

Version: 1 Date: 10 December 2007

Reviewer: Thomas Stibolt

Reviewer’s report:

1. Major compulsory revisions
The author needs to better explain the procedure used to determine visits for asthma. As I read the description, the performance of peakflow, spirometry or a reversibility test was used to identify asthma visits but one of the outcomes was performance of this type of testing. Something must be missing since the adherence to this guideline was less than 100% so clearly either some subset of this was being measured for performance or some expanded criteria was used to identify asthma visits. This should be clear.

It might be relevant to consider that any visit may have included evaluation of asthma and relook at the compliance with visit recommendations assuming all office visits may have addressed asthma. This is especially true of specialty visits.

2. Minor Essential Revisions
The study looks at performance on three guideline parameters, lung function determination and follow-up at two intervals. Although much of the series of recommendations that are in most guidelines have a fairly strong basis in the literature, the role of repeated (as opposed to initial) office measurements of pulmonary function and the timing and importance of follow-up are among the most poorly studied with little clear guidance from the literature. This is worthy of further discourse in the discussion section.

Overall comments
1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
The work described is relevant, interesting and original

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
Yes, the methodology and work is very clearly spelled out with the exception of identification of asthma office visits.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
With the exception of the need to clarify asthma visit identification, yes.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes. I see no problems here.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
Yes. As noted above, additional discussion of the specific recommendations studied would be useful.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Yes.

7. Is the writing acceptable?
Yes, with the exceptions specified.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory 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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.