Reviewer's report

Title: Suboptimal asthma care for immigrant children: results of an audit study

Version: 1 Date: 22 July 2007

Reviewer: Susanna Esposito

Reviewer's report:

General

The paper of van Laar et al. evaluates ethnic differences in suboptimal asthma care in the Netherlands. The topic is of medium interest for clinicians but the study has major limitations see below). Moreover, a revision by an English mother-tongue should be considered.

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

- The authors studied asthma care but no clear definition of asthma is included in their study. Did the enroll only children with a single episode of asthma? This represents a relevant point because asthma severity and asthmatic recurrences may significantly influence the care of the patients.
- I have some concerns on the fact that the authors enroll only 35 children with asthma in 7 months in 6 primary healthcare centers in Amsterdam. Why is the study population so limited?
- Data on a control group of non-immigrant asthmatic children have to be added.
- Results have to describe all the studied items. They could not be summarized in four major points.
- More details on the previous history of asthma of the study population have to be included. Moreover, data on history of allergy and use of prophylactic drugs have to be included.
- Tables 2 and 3 have to describe results in details. Moreover, differences between centres have to be described. Data on follow-up of the study patients after enrollment are also required.
- Discussion has to consider the prevalence of asthma in the Netherlands as well as in different ethnic groups worldwide.
- No conclusion could be obtained on prevention of asthma exacerbations on the basis of study results. More details on results are required.

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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)
- Abstract does not summarize results adequately.
- In the paragraph on assessment of suboptimal care, it is not clear why the panel had to judge the quality of care of 22 and not all cases.
- Differences between centres as well as between Emergency Room and primary care setting have to be included and considered in the discussion.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Reject because scientifically unsound

**Level of interest:** An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**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