Reviewer's report

Title: The impact of adverse events in the intensive care unit on hospital mortality and length of stay

Version: 1 Date: 11 June 2008

Reviewer: Jeffrey M Rothschild

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Major Compulsory Revisions

This is an important study conducted by investigators with deep experience. I have several concerns.

1. MRSA colonization should not be considered an AE. Five are reported in the appendix.

2. I do not agree with the assessment of preventability for VAP (8 cases) and CRBSI (2 cases). They are preventable - even though in retrospect the investigators cannot determine where the error occurred.

3. I have concerns about the review process that includes on the panel an intensivist and ICU nurse who were responsible during the week of the AE. Suggest reviewer was not the same clinicians that cared for the patient. This is especially important in rating preventability - bias is to under count errors.

4. How did the authors remove the bias they cited in the Rothschild paper regarding knowledge of AE outcome. How were the reviewers in this study blinded to outcomes resulting from the AE or otherwise (resulting from patient condition). In fact, the Rothschild study reviewers only know outcomes immediately due to the AE and, for example, did not know if the patient died a week later from their underlying disease.

Minor Essential Revisions

Typo Page 4, line 4: ant should be and

Discretionary Revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests