Author's response to reviews

Title: Atypical haemolytic uraemic syndrome presenting initially as suspected meningococcal disease

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor

Ref: 5623433781341273 – Atypical haemolytic uraemic syndrome presenting initially as suspected meningococcal disease

Please find below details of changes to the manuscript in response to reviewer comments.

Reviewer 1
Paragraph 1 of reviewer comments denoted by 1.1 etc.

1.1 “pronounced thrombocytopenia” no longer described as the result of an investigation – included instead as part of the blood characterisation results which changed the presumptive diagnosis to HUS.

“very depressed platelet count” also removed from this sentence since, as the reviewer points out, pronounced thrombocytopenia already communicates this finding.

1.2 Logic underlying change in diagnosis: additional detail has been added on the blood results which changed the presumptive diagnosis, reflecting more closely how this is described in the main body of the text, which the reviewer has described as well documented.

1.3 The reviewer states that: “the following argument does not make much sense: ‘early recognition for suspected meningococcal disease […] from other serious conditions.”

Response: unfortunately, the sentence has been misquoted and in its full form it reads: “early recognition and treatment for suspected meningococcal disease in very young children, while entirely appropriate, can initially divert attention from other serious conditions”.

The authors would respectfully assert that this sentence as written does clearly make the point that the rapid treatment instigated for meningococcal disease was appropriate, given the initial clinical presentation together with the well established lethality of the meningococcus.

Reviewer 2.

Reviewer 2 has requested that the paper should be extensively edited because it has not been reported coherently. Since the review did not elaborate on what was meant by an extensive edit or give examples of the perceived flaws we have scrutinised the paper for sentences and phrases that could be modified to improve clarity. The following modifications were made to the text (added words have been underlined).
para 1, line 7: ‘particularly antibiotics’ changed to ‘...most notably antibiotics’

para 2, line 2: ‘non-blanching spots (on her thighs and a few on both cheeks)’
changed to ‘non-blanching spots on her thighs and face’
Reason: more detail given later in article so unnecessary duplication.

para 3 line 12: ‘40/min’ now in parenthesis after ‘respiratory rate was at the upper range of normal (40/min)’.

para 3 line 18: ‘possible meningococcal septicaemia’
now ‘possible case of meningococcal septicaemia’.

para 4 line 3: ‘...White blood cell count and neutrophil counts were above normal’
changed to ‘White blood cell count and neutrophil counts were both above normal’

para 7 line 7 [Discussion & Conclusion]
‘...a first impression of meningococcal disease’
changed to : ‘...the first impression of meningococcal disease’

para 8 line 1: ‘This particular case is further complicated by likely classification...’
changed to: ‘This particular case is further complicated by its likely classification...’

para 9 line 4: ‘...given the clinical presentation..’
changed to ’...given the initial clinical presentation...’