Reviewer's report

Title: The boy who refused an IV: a case report of subcutaneous clodronate for bone pain in a child with Ewing Sarcoma

Version: 2 Date: 24 February 2007

Reviewer: Francesco Dentali

I am familiar with the literature and believe that this case meets one of the 7 criteria for evaluation in the journal: An unexpected event in the course of observing or treating a patient

Has the case been reported coherently?: Yes

Is the case report authentic?: Yes

Is this case worth reporting?: Yes

Is the case report persuasive?: Yes

Does the case report have explanatory value?: No

Does the case report have diagnostic value?: Yes

Will the case report make a difference to clinical practice?: Yes

Comments to authors:

General

Revisions necessary for publication

In this case report Dr Siden described the use of clodronate, a bisphosphonate, to treat bone pain in a child with Ewing’s sarcoma not responsive to a combination of opiates, gabapentin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. This report could be of interest to readers since it described for the first time the use of clodronate in a child with malignancy in order to treat bone pain. Furthermore, an other potential point of interest is the novelty in the route of the drug administration. For the first time clodronate was used subcutaneously in a child.

On the other hand, discussion and conclusions are extremely long. The part of discussion and conclusions on the problems affecting Pediatrics in dealing with off-label medication uses is beyond of the aims of a case report and should not be included.

Specific comments:
1. Please, shorten conclusion and discussions excluding the part on the problems affecting Pediatrics in dealing with off-label medication uses.
2. Since pain was assessed only by verbal self-report (the child did not want to use a standardized childhood pain scale), a more complete description of the child bone pain relief should be provided. Furthermore, it would be interesting to know if the other medications were reduced after clodronate introduction.
3. Page 6, line 12: “use” instead of “us”

What next?: Revise and resubmit

Quality of written English: Acceptable