Reviewer's report

Title: Congenital syphilis, still a reality in 21st century- a case report

Version: 2 Date: 16 July 2007

Reviewer: Katerina Lagios

I am familiar with the literature and believe that this case meets one of the 7 criteria for evaluation in the journal: Presentations, diagnoses and/or management of new and emerging diseases

Has the case been reported coherently?: Yes

Is the case report authentic?: Yes

Is this case worth reporting?: Yes

Is the case report persuasive?: No

Does the case report have explanatory value?: Yes

Does the case report have diagnostic value?: Yes

Will the case report make a difference to clinical practice?: No

Comments to authors:

General
A recent useful review article: Chakraborty R. Luck S. Managing congenital syphilis again? The more things change...Current Opinion in Infectious Diseases.20(3):247-52, 2007 Jun. This review article states that 76% of late congenital syphilis cases have palatal deformations.

Medline lists 4 other articles re - Congenital syphilis and palate - were these reviewed?

TPHA titres are not useful and usually reported as just postive as they (unlike VDRL) do not correlate with disease.

Information regarding the pathophysiology of the palate would be useful - presumed granulomatous change?

There is not any information on the effect of treatment - did the palatal lesion improve? What was the boy's actual VDRL titre after treatment?

It is presumed that this is the couples oldest child?

The case report does well to highlight the need to contact and screen appropriately ie parents and siblings and review obstetric history.
It usefully points out that both administrative and cultural barriers need to be addressed and the parallel with the successful HIV programmes show that it is feasible.

Revisions necessary for publication

What next?: Revise and resubmit

Quality of written English: Acceptable