Reviewer’s report

Title: Spontaneous rupture of an infected renal cyst and external drainage through lumbar surgical scar in a male patient with cervical spinal cord injury: a case report

Version: 3 Date: 12 October 2007

Reviewer: Maxwell Meng

I am familiar with the literature and believe that this case meets one of the 7 criteria for evaluation in the journal: New associations or variations in disease processes

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?: No

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

Comments to authors:

General

The authors report on an interesting, and unfortunate, case of a chronically ill patient with renal infection and spontaneous drainage through a prior surgical incision. If indeed this was a spontaneous rupture of an infected renal cyst, the it would contribute to the medical literature.

Revisions necessary for publication

In reviewing this case, several questions arise and aspects should be addressed. First, what was the patient’s renal function? Second, the images raise the question of whether this kidney has obstruction and resultant pyonephrosis, rather than infected renal cysts. I would suspect that this may be the case given the radiographic appearance as well as the prior pyelolithotomy, which may have resulted in UPJ obstruction or infundibular stenosis. Is there a retrograde pyelogram? Could this have been treated with urinary drainage (e.g. ureteral
stent)? Third, I question whether physical trauma actually contributed to the rupture. Why does this mechanism need to be invoked, when it is entirely plausible that in this chronically and critically ill patient, the purulent collection reached a point of spontaneous rupture? Fourth, it does not surprise me that the pus drained where it was observed.

**What next?:** Revise and resubmit

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published