Reviewer's report

Title: A prospective, observational cohort study of patients presenting to an Emergency Department with acute shoulder trauma: The Manchester Emergency Shoulder (MeSH) project

Version: 1 Date: 2017-06-22

Reviewer: Robert J. Neviaser

Reviewer's report:

At the outset, I must admit that the system in which we work in the US is sufficiently different than that under which the authors work in the UK. Patients with these injuries are referred directly to Orthopaedic Surgeons and not to their primary care providers or followed up in ED clinics. With that understanding, I continue to find that the small number of patients, 75% of whom were under age 50, does not permit conclusions to be drawn. Although the authors state that their goal was not to recommend getting MRA on all patients who meet their inclusion criteria, that, in fact, is what most readers will conclude. Clearly they cannot control that, but such a disclaimer needs to be made clearly, if this proceeds to publication.

It seems that only 5 of the 20 studied patients required orthopaedic intervention although I am not able to discern what that was. Of the lesions found, I do not see any that should need more than non operative management, even the 20 year old with a partial tear. Simply using the fact that someone cannot elevate their arm above 90 degrees at two weeks as a criterion for getting an MRA, should not, in and of itself, lead to an MRA. Additional physical findings and the patient's response to a subacromial lidocaine injection (the so-called impingement test) should be included in the decision making. No mention is made of this.

Although my recommendation would be not to publish this study as it does not increase our knowledge base. I have 22 years of editorship experience including 12 as Editor-in-Chief of the international Journal of Shoulder and Elbow Surgery on which to reach my decision. However, I am not an Emergency Physician and as I have noted, work under a different system. I suspect that it would not be accepted in an American based journal but the different circumstances in the UK may allow you to reach a different decision.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?  
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?  
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?  
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No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?  
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Not relevant to this manuscript

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