Reviewer’s report

Title: Knowledge, attitudes, and practices of Cameroonian physicians with regards to acute pain management in the emergency department: a multicenter cross-sectional study

Version: 0 Date: 01 Jul 2019

Reviewer: Yves Chaput

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity of reviewing this manuscript. I usually divide my comments into major and minor points. Major points are those that require a response from the authors, either in factual changes to the manuscript or, if in disagreement, a counter argument in their response letter. Minor points are mere suggestions that the authors a free to consider (or not).

I have divided them in accordance to the sections typically found in a BMC-EM manuscript (Background, Methods, Results and Discussion).

BACKGROUND section, Major Point:

1- The background section is well written but the authors fail to give the reader a valid reason why this study was undertaken. I understand that pain is a frequent presenting symptom to the ED worldwide. However, the authors provide no information as to whether this is also the case in the typical Cameroon ED and furthermore, tend to assume that pain management is deficient there (they state that one of the goals of this study is to "improve" pain management, suggesting that it is a priori deficient without providing data supporting this contention, which is indeed the goal of this study).

Their Discussion section does contain country specific ED data on Lebanon and India that might be comparable to the situation in Cameroon. This could set up and introduce the study if they summarized this information in the Background section.

METHODS section, Major Points:

1- No reason is given for excluding physicians with expertise in the ER in this study. Furthermore, the authors do not provide information as to the general make-up of a Cameroon ER, which is important here. Are there board certified ER specialists (or, alternatively, GPs who work permanently in the ER) or are they regular GPs who take turns being on call? If the former
then one would assume that they would be primarily responsible for assessing and treating patients with acute pain so why were they excluded?

2- Little information is given as to this questionnaire. It should be fully described in this section. Furthermore, the authors state that pre-established and pre-tested although has been objectively validated? What are the gold standards that this questionnaire refers to in terms of cut-off points?

3- How was the questionnaire administered? Who administered it?

4- Was there any missing data for the 58 questionnaires filled-out?

5- Unfortunately I could not gain access to the actual questionnaire, either through the supplemental information link of the manuscript or via the BMC-EM web site.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION sections, Major Point:

1- Without a detailed description of the questionnaire and its validation it is really difficult to interpret the results of this study. For instance, what is the gold standard for an "good knowledge" of pain management? Inversely, what is "poor" pain management? What is it compared to? For instance, the pharmacological half-life of the various drugs for pain management is used as an index here but what assures the authors that their GPs (or indeed any other GP in any other country on the planet) have a better knowledge of, say, the pharmacological ½ life of a typical anti hypertensive? What the authors may be measuring is a generic level of knowledge in a very specific area of medicine (pharmacokinetics). Did the authors assess this?

2- Regarding the level of knowledge of pain management in several countries (Lebanon, Iran, India…) there is no detailed analysis of the methods used in these other studies to determine that level, compared to the methods used in this study.

Minor points:

Some tables contain headers written in French (table 1 for instance).

I would replace "good answer" with "correct answer" in the text.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess
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?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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