Reviewer’s report

Title: Percentage of small platelets on peripheral blood smear and Child-Turcott-Pugh class can predict the presence of oesophageal varices in newly diagnosed patients with cirrhosis: development of a prediction model for resource limited settings

Version: 0 Date: 12 Jun 2019

Reviewer: Kevin Roedl

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript.

The manuscript by Perera K. and colleagues explores the prediction of oesophageal varices (OV) in patients with newly diagnosed liver cirrhosis via peripheral blood smear in combination with Child-Turcott-Pugh class (CTP). The main finding was that the model could accurately predict OV with a sensitivity of 89%. This method is especially interesting for resource limited settings. Early identification of patients at risk for gastro-intestinal bleeding is a cornerstone. The shown method could be quite interesting for resource limited settings where an endoscopy unit is not available. Especially for early treatment initiation and referral to a specialized center this is from large interest.

I enjoyed reviewing this manuscript, nevertheless I have a few concerns.

Abstract:
- Please add the country where the study was undertaken.
- On which timepoints where the hematological parameters taken, admission?

Introduction:
- Please describe the presence/epidemiology of liver cirrhosis, in respect to the resource limited setting.
- Is the method used easy to learn? Does this have to be performed by an haematologist? If so this would be a massive limitation for your findings.

Methods:
- How was liver cirrhosis diagnosed? (Clinical parameters, Ultrasound, CT, Biopsy ..)
- Was a diagnostic algorithm used?
- Page 9 - Data analysis: .. p value of 0.05… - please add „<"

Results:
- Can you please provide median age besides only age groups - I think according to the small number of patients that brings no further relevant information
- What was the underlying cause of liver cirrhosis (Viral, alcoholic, etc) - please add
- Could you add more information on the baseline characteristics of the study population? Probably in a table (Age/Male-Female/CTP - subclasses/cause of cirrhosis etc.)
- There is a large number of tables - probably some of them could be in the supplementary materials.

Discussion:
- Please add short introduction in the Discussion.
- Is there an explanation why indices obtained by automatic analyzers did not shown any prediction?
- How many patients had acute decompensation on admission, when liver cirrhosis was diagnosed?
- Did you further had the chance, even this would not be possible in the resource limited setting, also use Fibroscan to correlate your findings in our cohort?
- Also a possible explanation why Thrombocytopenia was not predictive - could be that all patients with sings of Infection were excluded? Please add and comment.
- Please add if the method could be used by "everyone" or only by expert hematologists. This would have a big influence your findings

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

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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