Reviewer's report

Title: Serratia marcescens outbreak in a neonatal intensive care unit: crucial role of implementing hand hygiene among external consultants.

Version: 2  Date: 29 July 2014

Reviewer: Raffaele Zarrilli

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript by Montagnani et al. aims to investigate a Serratia marcescens outbreak into a neonatal intensive care unit. The works should be important to the field and potentially of interest for the readers of the Journal, but suffers from an incomplete experimental design and technical inconsistencies. I am listing below specific comments that should be addressed.

-Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The design of the study should be better delineate and isolates should be described according to date, source and patients from which they were isolated. In particular, it is important to know if rectal swabs were isolated before ocular swabs in the patients enrolled in the study.

2. The results of environmental sampling, even if S. marcescens was not isolated, should be provided. It is impossible that no microbial species were isolated.

3. To argue that hand hygiene may have played a crucial role in controlling the outbreak, the compliance of hand hygiene procedures should have been measured.

4. Antimicrobial susceptibilities of the two ERIC-PCR clone identified need to be presented in detail. Are the S. marcescens isolates ESBL producers?

-Minor Essential Revisions

1. The study period should be detailed in the Abstract and Results section.

2. Methods section: The expression “We used the rapid and accurate PCR assay by Colom and colleagues to test the presence of three bla genes” should be replaced by “We used the rapid and 89 accurate PCR assay by Colom and colleagues to test the presence of blaTEM, blaSHV and blaOXA genes”.

- Discretionary Revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.

Raffaele Zarrilli