Reviewer's report

Title: Diversity of infectious aetiologies of acute undifferentiated febrile illnesses in South and Southeast Asia: A systematic review

Version: 1 Date: 06 Sep 2018

Reviewer: Ooriapadickal Cherian Abraham

Reviewer's report:

The authors of this manuscript have tried to describe the aetiology of AUFI in South and Southeast Asia by doing a systematic search of the published literature, and including studies published over a 19 year period from 1998 to 2017.

The inclusion of the term "systematic review" in the title is misleading. The literature search was done in a systematic fashion. The data presented in the "Results" section is only descriptive in nature. So, this manuscript is only a narrative summary of the studies on AUFI from South and Southeast Asia during this period.

The major problem with this study is the heterogeneity due to the following factors:

1. Inclusion criteria were either not clearly defined, or not the same across all the included studies.

2. Case definitions for each disease associated with AUFI were not standardised.

3. Most studies used commercially available serological tests to confirm the aetiology of AUFI. Validated laboratory methods were not used uniformly to form the basis of standardised case definitions for each infection.


Given the above reasons, I feel that it is best to report the results as aetiology of AUFI among children, adults, out-patients, in-patients and countries as separate categories.
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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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

Acceptable

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