Reviewer’s report

Title: A Systematic Review of Cases of Meningitis in the Absence of Cerebrospinal Fluid Pleocytosis on Lumbar Puncture

Version: 4 Date: 08 Feb 2019

Reviewer: Pamela Palasanthiran

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for attending to the comments. Your article clearly represents a body of detailed work. There is more clarity regarding the various sub-groups by age and co-morbidities, and the addition of co-morbidities to the table is is plus. I still think the sub-groups are distinct but your overall synthesis is generic - that is, your findings are generalised to all comers. It is expected that the different sub-groups are different e.g. oncology patients may be neutropenic and therefore may not have enough WC to engender a leucocytic response in the CSF. However, I acknowledge that to further work the data by analysis of subgroups would not be meaningful as the numbers are small. Suggest though that this be included as limitation. Perhaps where you raise the concept of bias: that the findings have been synthesised across age groups consisting predominantly of neonates and children and immune competent population and therefore generalised, and representative of a heterogeneous group. And that the small numbers precluded meaningful interpretation by sub-groups

Please revise your sentence 264. It should be ..........'........the vaccination for Hemophilus influenza B (Hib) in childhood'........

Please could you also define 'seniors' in your age groups (it looks to be > 65 years ?)

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.
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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