Reviewer’s report

Title: The Utility of Endotracheal Aspirate Bacteriology in Identifying Mechanically Ventilated Patients at Risk for Ventilator Associated Pneumonia: a Single-Center Prospective Observational Study

Version: 0 Date: 18 Mar 2019

Reviewer: Adrian Ceccato

Reviewer's report:

In this study Kabak and col. analyzed the association of bacterial colonization with progression to VAP in mechanically ventilated patients. The authors studied 240 patients in 3 ICUs, and isolated a microorganism in 125 patients. The rate of VAP was high, and was not statistically different between patients heavily and lightly colonized.

The authors only analyzed microbiology data and diagnosis of VAP was assessed retrospectively. The study is interesting; however there are some issues that should be addressed.

- The rate of VAP is higher than 35%, this rate would seem similar to rate of VAP in patients heavily colonized by Staph aureus. So, the effect of heavily colonisation would be similar than in patients with none isolation. Please discussed it widely.

- There is a lack of clinical data of patients that would be of interest for the analysis, for instance underlying conditions, antibiotics prescriptions, tracheobronchitis diagnosis, CPIS, or infections other than VAP. Please include it.

- There are several figures difficult to understand because they have two, three or more panels (e.g fig 2, 3 and 4). Please, simplify them.

- In the table 1, the clustered between surgical and medical ICU don’t contribute to results and discussion.

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.

Yes
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

Declaration of competing interests  
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I have not conflict of interest

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors'
responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal.