Reviewer’s report

Title: Evaluation indicates that the Belgian Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease surveillance meets its objectives but can be optimized

Version: 1 Date: 25 May 2015

Reviewer: Eiji Nakatani

Reviewer’s report:

Dr. Litzroth et al. reported well the current condition of Belgian Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease surveillance, this manuscript presents a lack of regular feedback and problem of data-collecting method for data provider, and small number of autopsy on suspected CJD cases for CJD surveillance. The data and methods may certainly be of use for surveillance problems in other country or disease. However, the writing often lacks clarity and sharpness, and several sections are poorly organized or do not flow with the rest of the paper.

Major Compulsory Revisions

#Result should be separated into following four sections, 1. difference of numbers of CJD patients between CJD surveillance data and hospital based data, 2. variable completeness as data quality, 3. survey for referral behavior of neurologists, 4. survey for importance and collecting method of CJD and vCJD surveillance in neurologists, reference centers and public health officials. Particularly, to compare CJD surveillance data with hospital-based data, you should make a crossed table with “underwent autopsy”, “reported as probable”, “reported as suspected” and “not reported” as category, stratified by a suitable category of years. I recommend to refer to number and characteristics for cases that did not reported as surveillance data.

Minor Essential Revisions

#The sentence: “Confirmed cases require neuropathological confirmation” is duplicated.

#In method, How did you evaluate “completeness for all variables”?

#“We could not calculate response proportions, because we did not have access to the email distribution lists of the organization.” and “We could therefore not calculate response proportions.” are not necessary in Method, these belong to Result.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.