Reviewer’s report


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Reviewer: Anna Schotthoefer

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This manuscript is a descriptive study based on retrospective analysis of hospital records data in the National Health Service (NHS) databases of England and Wales. The objectives of the study were to describe the incidence of Lyme disease diagnosis in patients admitted to hospitals for the period 1998-2015, to characterize the demographics of diagnosed Lyme disease patients, and to describe the healthcare utilization pathways of patients through the NHS.

The authors detected increases in the incidence of hospital-admitted Lyme disease cases in England and Wales during the study period, a bimodal age distribution, with higher incidences in females, patients of white ethnicity, and in patients from lower socioeconomic, rural areas of central southern England and Wales.

I thought the authors did an excellent job discussing the various interpretations of their findings, as well as the limitations of the dataset in the Discussion.

The only small change that I may recommend, is inclusion of a statement in their Methods section regarding the use of the ICD-10 coding system in the NHS. Although the ICD-10 system was developed before the beginning of their study time period, the adoption by different nations has varied, such that it may be important for readers to know that the ICD-10 system was used throughout their time period, as I assume was the case. Otherwise, if the transition to ICD-10 occurred at some point during their time period, they should explain that.

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

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