Reviewer’s report

Title: A systematic review of clinical guidelines on the management of acute, community-acquired CNS infections

Version: 0 Date: 13 Mar 2019

Reviewer: Arun Venkatesan

Reviewer's report:

The authors present a systematic review of clinical guidelines on the management of CNS infections. The topic is of substantial interest given the heterogeneity in clinical practice and the importance of regional differences in the presentation and management of CNS infections. The methodology is quite sound and comprises both comprehensive database searches and an electronic survey, for which the response rate was adequate. The manuscript is overall well written and the tables, which allow for a rapid comparison of various guidelines, are quite informative. Helpful recommendations are offered for studies that scored below four per AGREE II criteria. In my opinion, this is a valuable contribution to the literature.

Comments to address:

1) Some passages in the Results section belong in the Discussion. Page 21 line 438 "A Cochrane review from 2015 concluded that..." is a clear example of this. There are MANY other examples of statements made i.e. "MRI is useful for detection of early changes and for excluding alternative causes and is more sensitive and specific compared to CT", "Therefore bacterial meningitis cannot be ruled out based on the absence of classical signs and symptoms alone", etc. that should either be reworded (i.e. "it was found that, it was noted that, etc.) so that they are appropriate for Results or moved to Discussion.

2) Boxes 1 and 2 are unnecessary, just include in the text

3) Unclear exactly how overall quality score was ascertained from the domain scores, please clarify

4) Results--> "The data showed good correlation between scores for the key domain 'rigour of development' and the overall quality scores". This statement is offered without any analysis. Please provide measures of quantification of correlation

5) Table 6, I would remove the IEC study since it does not address treatment; otherwise this table may be misleading as the audience may come away with the impression that the IEC does not recommend acyclovir for encephalitis
6) The manuscript needs to be edited for language

**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.

Not applicable

**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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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