

Erratum

Short-term cefotaxime prophylaxis reduces the failure rate in lower limb amputations

Rolf Norlin, Aril Frydén, Lennart Nilsson and Steffan Ånséhn

Acta Orthop Scand 1990; 61(5): 460–2.

To the Editor:

The paper by Rolf Norlin et al. (1990) contains important statistical miscalculations—leaving a false conclusion from their results as regards the value of cefotaxime prophylaxis.

Stating that 15/18 healed compared with 10/17 controls is significant with a value of $P < 0.001$ is obviously wrong considering the small sample numbers. Fisher's exact test gives $P = 0.15$. A single-sided

Fisher test (not recommended) gives $P = 0.11$. The test on the BK amputees comparing 11/13 healed in the treatment group with 5/11 healed in the control group giving $P < 0.01$ is also a miscalculation. Fisher's exact test gives $P = 0.08$ (0.06, single-sided).

The results of Norlin et al. thus do not justify the conclusion that the failure rate in lower limb amputations is reduced by cefotaxime prophylaxis.

Morten Stahl Madsen

Department of Vascular Surgery, Rigshospitalet, DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark

Peter Mikkelsen

Department of Orthopedics, KAS Glostrup, DK-2600 Glostrup, Denmark

To the Editor:

The statistical calculations in our paper on prophylactic antibiotic treatment were performed using a standard computer program. This statistical evaluation

was not correct. After recalculation, we must agree with Morten Stahl Madsen and Peter Mikkelsen: our conclusion is not supported.

Rolf Norlin

Department of Orthopedics, University Hospital, S-581 85 Linköping, Sweden

Interdum dormitat bonus Homerus (Horatius' *De arte poetica*, v. 359)

The above letters make one wonder how manuscripts submitted to *Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica* are screened for accuracy of methods and conclusions. The manuscript by Norlin and coworkers was reviewed by 2 coeditors, 3 expert reviewers, and by myself after it had been presented at a meeting of the Swedish Orthopedic Society. And to boot, the assertive title was coined in our office!

Clearly, we failed, and we owe an apology to our readers, who have had this unintended lesson in the fallibility of scientific publication. However, I feel even more apologetic to Dr. Norlin and his coauthors. It is the duty of a journal with our experience—and resources—to shield our contributors from the calamity of going into print on false premises.

Göran C. H. Bauer

Editor