Reviewer's report

Title: Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) in Three HIV-positive Patients with Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome

Version: 1  Date: 16 February 2014

Reviewer: Kevin Thornton

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Discretionary Revisions:
1. More demographic information on each of the three patients (e.g. age, sex, BMI) would be helpful.

2. More specifics regarding modes of mechanical ventilation used in each patient and definitions of protective vs ultra-protective ventilation. To readers not from an ECMO referral center, these are likely unfamiliar concepts. I would recommend listing the tidal volume in cc/kg for each patient and the mode of ventilation used prior to and during ECMO support.

3. Elaboration on decisions and criteria used to wean patients. For example, in patient 2, the authors point to specific measures of pulmonary compliance as indicators of wean-ability. This data is absent for patient 1 and 3. Why use compliance in this one patient and not the others? Is that the primary criteria used by this center?

4. I recommend more coherent presentation of the details and timeline of each case. For example, in patient 2, the timing of the removal of ECMO support is unclear and seems to conflict between two paragraphs.

5. There are minor grammatical mistakes throughout the manuscript. While they don't detract from the message, they could be improved.

Overall, an interesting report of a series of cases.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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.