Author's response to reviews

Title: Susceptibility to intestinal infection and diarrhoea in Zambian adults in relation to HIV status and CD4 count

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Author's response to reviews:

Thank you very much for the helpful comments of Reviewer 3. We have revised the manuscript accordingly and set out our responses in detail below. In the revised manuscript the changes are highlighted in pink.

1 The reviewer is quite right that our conclusions depend to a considerable extent on accounting satisfactorily for the aggregation within individuals. Once we had demonstrated that aggregation was occurring, we did take it into account in all further models and have checked the analysis again to ensure that this was not omitted; it was not. We are sorry that this was not made plain and have amended the text to make it more obvious in the Methods (p6) and Results (p9). There are some analyses where this cannot be taken into account, such as the Mantel-Haenszel stratified analysis of infection and HIV status: the numbers with each infection are simply too small to permit this further adjustment.

2 The issue of timing is important. We have inserted a fuller explanation in the Methods (p5) and we have included a discussion of the issue (p11).

3 We have amended this error to the point where Table 4 is introduced in the text (p8).

4 Table 1 was introduced at the request of Reviewer 1 and we thought that P values would be considered helpful. We have now removed them.