Reviewer's report

Title: Clinical Utility of a Nested Nucleic Acid Amplification Format in Comparison to Viral Culture for the Diagnosis of Mucosal Herpes Simplex Infection

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Reviewer: Dr W Yam

Level of interest: A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Advice on publication: Accept after revision, which I do not need to see

Comments:
1) Cross contamination is a major problem for laboratories performing two steps nPCR, leading to false positive results. However, this is not reflected from the result of this study. To avoid this, authors should address in discussion that regulations to perform diagnostic PCR must be followed (eg designated areas for different procedures)
2) What is the size of amplified PCR products (first and second)?
3) All positive specimens were re-tested. Are all first and repeated PCR results coherent?
4) Poor performance of nPCR was accounted by sub-optimal cell count in specimens. Common false negative result due to PCR inhibitors in specimens should be discussed. Is internal control guarding PCR inhibitors used in the assay?

Competing interests:

None declared.