Reviewer's report

Title: Seroprevalence of human immunodeficiency virus, hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus and syphilis infections among blood donors at Gondar University Teaching Hospital, Northwest Ethiopia.

Version: 3 Date: 4 February 2010

Reviewer: TAHZIBA HUSSAIN

Reviewer's report:

To,
Editor,
BMC Infectious Diseases.

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed the comments for the manuscript entitled, "Seroprevalence of human immunodeficiency virus, hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus and syphilis infections among blood donors at Gondar University Teaching Hospital, Northwest Ethiopia".

I thank you once again for giving me a chance to review the manuscript.

Sincerely yours

Tahziba Hussain
Dr.Tahziba Hussain

“Seroprevalence of human immunodeficiency virus, hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus and syphilis infections among blood donors at Gondar University Teaching Hospital, Northwest Ethiopia”.

It is a good attempt but very lengthy and not written concisely as a research paper. Thus, it does not provide complete information. The manuscript needs major revisions.

The manuscript is very long.

Title : “Seroprevalence of HIV, HBV, HCV and Syphilis infections among blood donors at ........... Ethiopia”. Including “trend over a period of 5 years” would be better.

Abstract :

Background : “The aim of the study ........... Ethiopia”. Include this also “to monitor trends of these infections over a period of time”.

Conclusion : It is not the right conclusion. Blood donors are usually screened for these infections namely, HIV, HBV, HCV and Syphilis. It may be replaced with “A substantial percentage of the blood donors harbor HIV and viral hepatitis infections, which otherwise would remain undiagnosed without serological
Keywords: Instead of the full form of HIV, only HIV may be written. Include Ethiopia also. The place of study is important.

Methodology:
1. The details of the HIV, HBsAg, HCV and RPR kits, (name, manufacturer, etc.) are enough. The specificity and sensitivity is not required. This will considerably reduce the length of the paper.

Results:
2. Not presented clearly.

Tables:
3. There is no need of 5 tables. It only adds more to the confusion.
4. Overall the tables are not represented clearly.
5. Sociodemographic profile is given in 3 tables.
6. In the Table 1, numbers and percentages may be given in the single column, like n (%).
7. Sex may be replaced by Gender in all the Tables.
8. Table 2 is fine. The title may be changed to the “Trend of seropositivity of HIV, HBV, HCV and Syphilis”. The calculation of percentages is incorrect in the HCV column in Table 2.
9. Table 3 multiple infections may be written as co-infections. Instead of and, only – is enough for coinfections, i.e., HIV and Syphilis may be written as HIV-Syphilis. Similarly, HIV-HBV, HIV-HCV and so on.
10. Table 4 and Table 5 may be combined and data of HIV, HBV, HCV and Syphilis-positive maybe clubbed, i.e., given side by side in separate columns and OR (95% CI and p values may be given in the last column.
11. The calculation of syphilis positive with reference to occupation is incorrect. The Table 4 shows 75 whereas the actual number is 83.
12. The calculation of percentages is incorrect in Table 5.
13. Blood group and Rh typing although is given but it is not relevant with reference to transmission of viral diseases. There is no new information with regard to the blood groups.

Results:
14. It is not required to repeat the results given in Tables in the text with OR, CI and p values. Simply state whether it is significant or not.
15. It appears from the Table 1 that labourers, farmers and students constitute a major chunk of the blood donors. Explain, what are the reasons for which students donate blood frequently.

Discussion:
16. Some statements are just not needed example, page 11: “The partner…………….. contamination”.

17. The reasons for high HIV positivity among merchants, soldiers and carpenters and high syphilis among labourers and carpenters may not be given. This paper deals with seroprevalence and there is no need of such assumptions.

18. page 11 : second line. “first time donators” It is wrong. Please write donors.

19. There is too much comparison with other studies. Ideally, the authors should first analyse the observations of the present study and then quote what other studies report.

References:

20. The authors have quoted references mostly from South Africa. Cite some more references from other regions of the world as well.

21. Reference no.24 – check the spelling of potential.

22. Reference no.18 and 27 are conference papers. So, they may be deleted.

23. Reference no.40 is wrongly written as 34.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Yes but not described as in a research paper.

3. Are the data sound? Yes.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Partially Yes.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Yes.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes.


If the authors revise their manuscript with suggested changes, the message that they wish to convey will be clear.

Considering the Impact Factor of the journal, wide readership, etc., I feel, if more matter is included in the study, it would provide a useful information on the status of coinfections among blood donors in Ethiopia. I thank you once again for giving me a chance to review the manuscript.

Sincerely yours

Tahziba Hussain

Dr.Tahziba Hussain
Scientist D / Assistant Director
HIV/AIDS Unit, National JALMA Institute for Leprosy & OMD,
Tajganj, AGRA-282001
Email- tahziba_hussain@hotmail.com

**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:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests’