Reviewer's report

Title: Primary gamma-herpesviral infection in Zambian children.

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Reviewer: Denise whitby

Reviewer's report:

Minhas et al describe a study of primary infection of a well characterized cohort of Zambian children with HHV-8 and EBV. The report is well written and clear and the methodology described sound. This is an important study as little has been reported to date on primary infection with HHV-8, especially in HIV and HHV-8 endemic regions such as Zambia where HHV-8 related disease is a major public health issue. The authors report that EBV infection occurs more frequently in children at 12months of age in this cohort and the infection by the two gammaherpesviruses is independent. The association of primary infection by HHV-8 with rash substantiates a previous much smaller study. The importance of HIV-1 infection as a risk factor for HHV-8 primary infection as reported here cannot be overstated as this has profound public health implications for resource limited regions such as Zambia. The authors are to be congratulated for producing such a thoughtful and thorough study that substantially advances our understanding of this important topic.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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