Reviewer's report

Title: Primary gamma-herpesviral infection in Zambian children.

Version: 1 Date: 24 February 2010

Reviewer: Chun Lu

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Re: “Primary gamma-herpesviral infection in Zambian children”

General Comments:
Minhas et al have assembled a set of data to compare the natural history of infection by EBV and HHV-8 along with the clinical manifestations and risk factors that are associated with early childhood infection in Zambia, which is an endemic area. It was suggested that there is no correlation between EBV and HHV-8 infections. Infection by one does not increase the susceptibility for the second virus. Primary HHV-8 and EBV infection in early childhood may clinically present as rash but remains largely asymptomatic and may remain undetected in this population. This study is potentially significant if the following questions can be addressed.

Major Points
1. With regard to HHV-8 test, the authors used BC-3 and baculovirus-infected Sf9 cells as known antigen with monoclonal-enhanced immunofluorescence assay (mIFAs). Did you compare this mIFAs with the other group-used methods, and what the result is?
2. Why you didn’t use the Sf9 cells which were simultaneously infected by ORF65, K8.1A, and ORF73 baculovirus?

Minor Points
1. With the respect to relationship between HHV-8 and EBV, some literature indicated HHV-8 and EBV these two viruses can influence their replication for each other, while they simultaneously infected one cells, such as BC-1 and JSC-1 cells. Therefore, some analyses and interpretation should be added to Discussion.

In sum, the ms can be further considered.