Author's response to reviews

Title: Colonization of pediatric cancer patients with Candida species does not lead to elevated levels of (1->3)-beta-D-glucan, Candida mannan or Candida DNA in serum samples

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Response to comments on Manuscript No. 1202667933474993

Research article: Colonization of pediatric cancer patients with Candida species does not lead to elevated levels of (1->3)-beta-D-glucan, Candida mannan or Candida DNA in serum samples

Eiman Mokaddas, Mona H. Burhamah, Zia U. Khan and Suhail Ahmad

BMC Infectious Diseases

To: Ms. Rebecca Simmons
Editorial Administrator
BMC Series Journals

Dear Ms. Simmons

Enclosed herewith please find the revised version of the above manuscript. All the changes suggested by the Associate Editor and the reviewers have been made and are highlighted in the red font. A point-by-point response is as follows:

Associate Editor Comments:

1. We meant “throat” samples as “oropharyngeal” samples. This mistake has been corrected throughout the text. Likewise, “anal” samples meant “rectal “ samples. This anomaly has also been corrected.

2. We have not tested the same anatomical sites for colonization from the healthy pediatric population. However, as pointed out by Reviewer 1, we have now included data on #-D-glucan and Candida mannan levels from pediatric cancer patients who were not found to be colonized with Candida spp.

3. As suggested, we have dropped the antifungal susceptibility data from the manuscript. This was also suggested by Dr. Groll.

Reviewer 1: Dr. Andreas H. H Groll
1. We agree with the reviewer that sampling of sites, such as nostrils, ear, groin and axilla are less relevant in the context of the present study, but samples of anus and throat represent the mucosal colonization and indicate the presence of Candida in the oropharynx and the rectum. We also feel that the correct term for throat sampling should be oropharynx, hence we have replaced it in the text and Table. It is true that we could not sample all the sites due to reluctance of some of the patients to allow us to take repeated anal or oropharyngeal samples at weekly intervals.

2. We have included glucan and Candida mannan data from the non-colonized patients in the revised manuscript.

Minor point:
As suggested by the reviewer, we have dropped antifungal susceptibility data.

Reviewer 2: Dr. Emmanuel Roilides

Major compulsory revision
1. The required information about the persistently colonized patients has been included. There was no statistically significant difference between the two cohorts.

2. Sera samples were collected at the time of first surveillance cultures for determining Candida colonization.

Minor essential revisions
1. We have tried to improve the syntax, wherever possible and some editorial mistakes have been corrected.

“Species” has been written as “spp.” throughout the manuscript. In addition, all the editorial changes suggested have been incorporated in the text.

Reviewer 3: Dr. Deanna A. Sutton

The suggested change has been incorporated in the revised manuscript.

As suggested by the Associate Editor and Reviewer 1, information pertaining to antifungal susceptibility has been dropped from the text including Table 4.