Reviewer's report

Title: Microbicide excipients can greatly increase susceptibility to genital herpes transmission in the mouse

Version: 3 Date: 21 October 2010

Reviewer: Brian Wigdahl

Reviewer's report:

The authors have responded to all critiques in a satisfactory manner. However, while this reviewer can concede that mechanism of action studies may be beyond the scope of this paper, the authors response to this request in the context of the suggestions provided by Reviewer 2 may be overstated with respect to whether mechanism of action studies should ever be done. This reviewer would disagree with the authors’ point that the mechanism of action studies should never be done just because of the demonstrated increase in HSV-2 infection. On the contrary, mechanism of action studies for failed microbicides, for example N-9, have proven to be very informative for future development of compounds in this area of study. While the understanding that the mechanism of action studies may be outside the scope of this paper, it is considered important to include more discussion concerning potential mechanisms involved in this enhancement (this point, however, will remain optional). Overall, the revisions made to the manuscript and the responses to the reviewers’ comments are acceptable.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.