Reviewer’s report

Title: A canine leishmaniasis pilot survey in an emerging focus of visceral leishmaniasis: Posadas (Misiones, Argentina).

Version: 1 Date: 10 August 2010

Reviewer: Richard Reithinger

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Cruz et al A canine leishmaniasis pilot survey in an emerging focus of visceral leishmaniasis: Posadas (Misiones, Argentina).

SUMMARY AND SIGNIFICANCE

In present manuscript the authors present data on visceral leishmaniasis (VL) infection in dogs in a new focus of VL in Argentina. Though the data has its limitations, it adds to our knowledge of VL in Argentina.

The article’s content is certainly of interest for readers of BMC Infectious Diseases.

MAJOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS / COMMENTS

1. Results of the statistical analysis should be moved to the results section rather than being presented in the Discussion section. Furthermore the section could be expanded, by testing the association of infection with dog age or sex, origin, and even symptomatic vs polysymptomatic status.

2. Authors should expand the section outlining the caveats of their analyses and the results presented. For example, authors should mention the possibility of other parasites, e.g. L. braziliensis and Trypanosoma cruzi, to cross-react with antigen used in serological tests.

3. The manuscript could be improved significantly if authors include a flowchart indicating number of samples processed, number of samples testing positive with one, two, three or four diagnostic approaches (rk39 RDT, IFAT, PB PCR and Ln PCR) used.

4. Although I know that English is not the authors’ native language, I suggest the authors ask a native English speaker to review manuscript, as there are several grammatical and spelling errors and at times it is not clear what authors try to convey to the reader. Some examples are outlined below,

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS / COMMENTS

Abstract

5. The number of dogs being positive by both serology and / or PCR should be stated.
Introduction
6. The sentence stating that L. amazonensis can cause VL in dogs should be deleted – it is unsubstantiated.

Methods
7. Change wording ‘Our study was based on a convenience sample of 110 dogs originating from two sources:…’ [P4]
8. Please specify the (reported) sensitivity and specificity of rk39 test and IFAT in dogs [P5].
9. Please specify the concentration of L. infantum promastigotes used as antigen.
10. Whether samples were tested in replicates should be clarified; were any discordant?
11. Is the LnPCR protocol Leishmania genus or subgenus specific – please specify [P5]
12. Although the protocol is referenced, the authors should specify in detail all primers used in PCR reactions.

Results
13. In the introduction the authors specified that L. chagasi is synonymous with L. infantum; hence, please delete L. chagasi from the text [P7].

Discussion
14. Wording: ‘together with the presence of L. infantum infection in urban dogs…’ [P7]

Authors contribution
15. Change wording: ‘ideated’ to ‘conceptualized’ [P10]
16. Spelling: shelters’ [P10]

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: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests