Reviewer's report

Title: Galactomannan testing of bronchoalveolar lavage fluid is useful for diagnosis of invasive pulmonary aspergillosis in hematology patients

Version: 3 Date: 16 December 2009

Reviewer: Emilie Fréalle

Reviewer's report:

The revised manuscript by Hsu et al. about the interest of GM detection in BAL for IFD diagnosis made the study design clearer. However, some major modifications still have to be done.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Since some tests were routinely performed in the lab (serum GM detection and BAL fungal culture), and retrospectively collected for the study, only the BAL GM detection (and not the whole study) can be considered as prospective. Please mention the prospective part of the study and the retrospectively collected data separately in the Material and Method section and update the rest of the manuscript.

2. Regarding the prospective determination of GM BAL (in order to evaluate its contribution to IFD diagnosis), patients with possible IFD but no other diagnosis cannot be excluded from the “cases” group for two reasons: Firstly, in clinical practice, BAL GM contribution to IFD diagnosis is especially interesting for these patients, who don’t have any other microbiological positive test. Secondly, they have to be taken into account to calculate the sensitivity (the 100% sensitivity is over-estimated) and to determine the optimal cut-off.

3. In my opinion, patients with possible IFD but other infection diagnosed cannot be included in a control group. They should rather be excluded, especially the mucormyosis patient, who actually has an IFD.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Please indicate the part of the BAL you worked on: total BAL, supernatant, or pellet?

2. Please indicate in the text the number of probable and proven IFD cases according to the EORTC/MSG criteria.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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.