Reviewer’s report

Title: Occult Hepatitis B Virus infection in ART-Naive HIV-Infected Patients seen at a Tertiary Care Centre in North India

Version: 2 Date: 7 May 2009

Reviewer: Selma de Andrade Gomes

Reviewer’s report:

Dear editor,

Thank you for the invitation to referee this manuscript. In this study the prevalence of HBV infection was investigated in 837 patients who were positive to HIV infection and naive for antiretroviral treatment. Furthermore the prevalence of HBV occult infection was investigated in 53 HBsAg negative subjects belonging to this HIV studied group.

Overall, this work is well presented and well written. My main suggestion is about the presentation of the results and illustrations that in my opinion may be improved:

1- Consider including a table crossing demographic data (sex, age distribution), HIV characteristics (HIV status, Risk groups, CD4 counts, etc...) other Infections (HCV, Tuberculosis) with HBV serological markers (HBsAg/anti-HBc; anti-HBs/anti-HBc, Anti-HBc alone, anti-HBs alone, no HBV serological markers).

2- Consider including another table showing HBV DNA detection in function of HBV serological markers (HBsAg/anti-HBc; anti-HBs/anti-HBc, Anti-HBc alone, anti-HBs alone, no HBV serological markers).

3- Consider modifying and merge the two figures showing only one figure that displays in one axis (x) the age distribution of the patients (distribution by 10 to 10 years) of 1- Studied group of HIV-1-patients and 2 – patients HIV + / HBsAg + . The other axis (y) shows the percentage of individuals. Each column of age may be subdivided in female and male gender.

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

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' below.