Author’s response to reviews

Title: Anal and oral human papillomavirus (HPV) infection in HIV infected subjects in Northern Italy: a longitudinal cohort study among men who have sex with men.

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Title:
Anal and oral human papillomavirus (HPV) infection in HIV-infected subjects in northern Italy: a longitudinal cohort study among men who have sex with men.

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To The Editor-in-Chief
BMC Infectious Diseases

Subject: Resubmission of manuscript entitled “Anal and oral human papillomavirus (HPV) infection in HIV-infected subjects in northern Italy: a longitudinal cohort study among men who have sex with men.” [Manuscript no. MS: 2107252299506738]

Dear Editor,
We would like to thank You and Your expert referees for reviewing our manuscript entitled “Anal and oral human papillomavirus (HPV) infection in HIV-infected subjects in northern Italy: a longitudinal cohort study among men who have sex with men.”
We have revised the manuscript by taking into consideration the useful comments and suggestions of the referees, which we believe helped us improve our manuscript considerably.
Our responses to the referees’ comments are listed below.
We hope that the revised version is now suitable for publication in the BMC Infectious Diseases.

Sincerely,

Saverio G. Parisi

Editor’s comment
… Further consideration of your manuscript is conditional on improvement of the English used.

Response
- Following the comment, our manuscript has been edited for language.
- all changes are highlighted in green through the manuscript.

Dr Filippo Ansaldi's comments
Referee's comment

The manuscript is acceptable with minor revision; it contains language errors or bad constructed sentences so authors should check carefully the English.

- Following the comment, our manuscript has been edited for language.
Page 5, line 17 and page 8, line 14 and page 13, line 4, page 11, line 15: There are errors in punctuation
- addressed

Page 6, line 12 and page 9, line 5: Some sentences should be rewritten
- addressed

Page 13, line 18: Authors should write “HPV infection rates..” instead of “Rate of HPV infection..”
- addressed

Paragraph “Methods”: Assay used for detection of HHV8-DNA from saliva samples should be better described by Authors

-The method applied to blood was already reported in another paper recently published by the group (Parisi SG, et al. Journal of Medical Virology, 2011, 83:384-390), using the same references. We processed saliva specimens as plasma, as now specified in the Methods (page 6 line 12).

Paragraph “Methods” page 8, line 15: Authors report that HPV persistence in low risk infections was 76.6 but on page 12, line 16 they report 75.9 and the value that they report in Table 3 is 76.7.
-These figures are now consistent (76.7)

Paragraph “Discussion” page 11, line 5-6: Authors should clarify this sentence.
- We have modified as follow (see page 12, lines 5-8): “However, minority genotypes are easily overlooked. Nevertheless, in our study, multiple HPV infections, which can be identified sometimes during editing of the electropherograms as multiple sequences, appear to occur less frequently than in the HIPVIRG study.”

Page 27 table 2: there is an asterisk that has no match in the table
- The asterisk was added in the table

Dr Rosa Coppola's comments
Referee's comment
In the Abstract the authors conclude at line 22-23 that two subpopulations of patients are delineated but this is inconsistent with the data reported in the abstract.

- We have deleted this sentence, and we conclude now that “A high prevalence of HPV infection was found in our cohort of HIV-infected MSM, with a negative relation between anal HPV infection and CD4 cell count”

All the acronyms must be introduced.

- addressed

According more recent literature HPV High Risk genotypes include 16,18,31,33,35,39,45,51,52,56,58,59,68,73; particularly genotype 45 is reported as one of the four most related to cervical carcinoma HPV genotypes but it is not reported in your report (pag 6, line 7-9)

- We have revised our findings to check for all the HR types indicated by the Reviewer. We never have identified any of the cited genotypes (31, 39, 45, 51, 52 59, 68), so that we added this findings in the panel specified in the Methods section, but the results did not change. According to the Reviewer, we have adopted an updated list of genotypes, as reported in Auvert et al (JAIDS 2010, introduced as reference 25, instead of Schiffman M et al.). Some genotypes were reconsidered as LR, and results were modified (highlighted in text and tables; fig 1 modified).

The description of HIV viral load detection (pag 6 lines 21-23) should be reported in the previous section, after line 17.

- addressed

In the results section comparison between proportions should be completed by p value when reporting that did not vary significantly or prevalence were similar.

- addressed

It is not clear where the number "283 anal swab and 242 oral swab" come from; please explain better

- 166 patients at Baseline and 117 at Follow-up for anal samples, for a total of 283 specimens. 166 patients at Baseline and 117 at Follow-up for oral samples = 283; 283 - 41 inadequate samples = 242.