Reviewer's report

Title: Seroprevalence and risk factors of herpes simplex virus type-2 infection among pregnant women in Northeast India.

Version: 2 Date: 10 June 2011

Reviewer: Joshua Schiffer

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for your many revisions. The multi-variate analysis is much improved & I continue to think that this is a very useful data set with important implications for the region.

Major compulsory revisions:


2. The vast majority of HSV2 seropositive people shed virus whether or not they are aware of recurrent genital lesions. Genital tract inflammation is evident in "asymptomatic shedders". These are key concepts in the field. The end of this discussion in its current form completely misses this point. The use of ACV to prevent HIV acquisition or transmission is a dead concept & will not be tested again in a large clinical trial. The studies by Celum et al were in fact quite "relevant" 7 addressed the relevant scientific question completely.

If the authors wish to argue that suppressing HSV is still a valid strategy for HIV prevention, then they need to advocate for a new drug that eliminates viral shedding and genital tract inflammation to a greater extent than acyclovir.

3. In reference to above, my opinion is that the the value of rising HSV seroprevalence in a pattern that differs from more typical age cohorts probably implies high HSV incidence among the young in certain regions within NE India. These data argue for targeted public health efforts (condoms, education campaigns etc...) to alter risk behaviors for HIV. In a sense, these data provide a useful epidemiologic signal for a possible impending spike in HIV incidence.

4. It should be stated in the methods that these ANCs are representative for the region as mentioned by another reviewer.

5. While I agree with the selection of statistical test, this does not obscure the fact that all cross-sectional studies can at best only assess correlations, and are prone to residual confounding to a greater extent than case control studies. This needs to be mentioned as a limitation.

6. The manuscript still needs substantial technical editing.
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 interest