Author's response to reviews

Title: Risk Factor for HIV-1 Seroconversion among Taiwanese Men Who Have Sex with Men Attending Gay Saunas

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Prof. Luca,

October 27, 2011

Thank you for your letter and reviewer’s comments on our manuscript entitled “Risk Factor for HIV-1 Seroconversion among Taiwanese Men Who Have Sex with Men Attending Gay Saunas” (MS No.: 1375744107530293). Enclosed please find a copy of the revised manuscript and a point-to-point reply to the comments and questions raised by the reviewer.

If you have any further comments or questions, please feel free to contact me at the following numbers: Tel: 886-2-28267193; Fax: 886-2-28270576; email: arthur@ym.edu.tw

Best regards

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Reply to the comments made by reviewer:

1. Comments: The authors have revised their manuscript according to the review comments, i.e. downplayed the phylogenetics. A few minor scientific issues remain, but my main concern is that the manuscript in my view now is better suited as a short communication. The results section is still very detailed and would benefit from just bringing forward the most relevant findings in tables 1-3. The phylogenetic tree could be moved to the supplements and the introduction and discussion could also be reduced a little more.

A: Thanks for the comments. Because the article types of BMC Infectious Disease do not have such category as ‘short communication’, we cannot modify our manuscript according to the reviewer’s suggestion. However, we have condensed the ‘introduction section’, ‘results section’, and ‘discussion section’ according to the reviewer’s comments. We also move the phylogenetic tree as the ‘Additional file 6’ as suggested by the reviewer (results section, page 9, lines 132-136).

2. Comments: The sentence in the introduction that states "... to overly optimistic belief that HAART can decrease the HIV-1 viral load ..." is still scientifically wrong and has to be rephrased. It is solidly documented that HAART (if properly used) decreases VL. Maybe you intended to state that "It has been reported that unprotected sex has increased among MSM after the introduction of HAART, which has resulted in dramatic decreases in the morbidity and mortality from HIV-1 infection."

A: We have modified the sentences on effect of HAART on HIV-1 transmission according to reviewer’s comments (page 4, second paragraph).