Reviewer's report

**Title:** Differing clinical characteristics between influenza strains among young adults in the tropics

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 31 August 2011

**Reviewer:** CHIDIAC CHRISTIAN

**Reviewer's report:**

Major Compulsory Revisions

The question raised by the authors is quite well defined; however, if the epidemiological interest seems evident, the clinical impact of this work is questionable. Will management of influenza infected patients be influenced by the knowledge of the type of virus? Authors should comment on the clinical impact of their study.

Methods are well described; however, it would be interesting to know the percentage of immunized patients against seasonal influenza.

The delay between onset of symptoms and diagnosis should be mentioned, and comparisons performed between strains.

Were antiviral, antibiotic, symptomatic treatments recorded at the two-weeks survey? Were influenza complication recorded? And is there any difference between strains?

The discussion and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported by the data. However additional points should be discussed:

Only symptomatic infections have been included in the study, therefore the percentage of symptomatic infection by circulating influenza strains cannot be evaluated neither differences between strains if any: authors should comment.

Once again, the clinical impact of the study should be discussed, in terms of clinical decision, outbreak control, surveillance strategies as stated by the authors; should the management of patients differ regarding the influenza strains? Authors are request to comment and to give references of published data on this field if any.

One explanation given for the observed differences may be the immune status against influenza, and thus, vaccination history should be mentioned.

Limitations of the work are stated, and may be completed:

Study is limited to male young adults; no children, no female, no elderly: thus conclusions apply only for the studied population; at-risk patients were also excluded. Another limit is that inclusion criteria are focused on respiratory symptoms; neurological symptoms, digestive symptoms, or complication may be the main symptoms of influenza; evolution of disease is not described at the two
weeks survey, and it should be interesting to compare the different strains. These points should be discussed.

The title and abstract should mention “.. among young healthy adults”

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

Pr Christian Chidiac has received reimbursements and fees from ROCHE and SANOFI-PASTEUR-MSD for lectures in scientific symposia and participation in advisory boards.