Reviewer's report

Title: Comparison of three multiplex PCR assays for the detection of respiratory viral infections: evaluation of xTAG Respiratory Virus Panel Fast assay, RespiFinder 19 assay and RespiFinder SMART 22 assay

Version: 3 Date: 9 February 2012

Reviewer: Guus Simons

Reviewer's report:

Overall, the authors have addressed most of the comments. I am pleased with that. I still have some minor remarks:

Minor essential revisions:

Page 5: "Another study performed a comparison with clinical samples of the RespiFinder-19 with the precursor assay of the RVP". Please also indicate the % of sensitivity and specificity as shown a few lines before about the specificity and sensitivity of the RVP assay.

Page 12, line 5: "This study indicated a higher analytical sensitivity of the RespiFinder 19 in the detection of virus infections in clinical samples......" If you are analyzing clinical samples, I would prefer using the name clinical sensitivity rather than analytical sensitivity.

Page 28, Table 4: RespiFinder 19 and RespiFinder Smart 22 are CE-IVD marked products. Please change.

Page 28, Table 4: The authors state that "personal training/qualification" takes 3 days / high. It is our experience that technicians who are familiar with sequencing on a ABI system can deal with RespiFinder-19 very easily without almost any training.

Guus Simons

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.