Reviewer's report

Title: Detection of Human herpesvirus 8 by quantitative polymerase chain reaction: development and standardisation of methods

Version: 1 Date: 2 May 2012

Reviewer: Helene JEULIN

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript describes a quantitative polymerase chain reaction for HHV-8 detection and quantification in peripheral blood mononuclear cells and biopsies. The article is well written. The method is precisely described, and the development was made following international recommendations. The limits of the structure of the laboratory, of the described method and of the results interpretation are underlined and well-argued.

Major compulsory revisions
None

Minor essentials revisions
1. Page 2. Line 12. "High a high prevalence". Remove the adjective that is duplicated
7. Page 13. Line 9. Check the syntax of the sentence "Plasmid constructs formed …", it seems to be missing a verb.
8. Page 15. Line 9. Check the name of the reagent "ABI PRISMTM BigDye".
9. Page 16. Line 24. "The standard curve was rejected if … linearity was > 0.9800" You probably mean < 0.9800 ? Please rectify or justify.
10. Page 18. line 10. Check the sentence "three are two copies".

Discretionary revisions
1. Page 2. Line 25. Viral load in KS biopsies is expressed as copies/µL. Please precise: µL of DNA extract, or µL of PCR mix, or … ?
In general, it is not clear, in the manuscript, why the results of PCR in Kaposi biopsies are expressed as copies/cells (e.g. in the abstract) while you suggest
that normalization to cells is much better suited for monitoring in PBMC (e.g. in the conclusion).

2. The limit of quantification cannot be lower than the limit of detection. The limit of quantification for HHV-8 ORF26 PCR and GAPDH PCR should be considered equal to the limit of detection.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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 interests.