Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 31 May 2012

Reviewer: Amos Rodger Mwakigonja

Reviewer's report:

Dear Editors, I have reviewed the paper titled: "Detection of Human herpesvirus 8 by quantitative polymerase chain reaction: development and standardisation of methods"

and I have the following general comments: this is a well written paper and

1. The research question posed by the authors is well defined.
2. The methods used were appropriate and well and extensively described.
3. The data is sound as is backed by either well established assays whereby references are quoted or in case of a new protocol like the in-house HHV8 plasmid generation, backed by sound scientific backround and reasoning. They used BCBL1 cell lines which we have also used before and are full of HHV8 (Pak.F, et al., Kaposi’s sarcoma herpesvirus load in biopsies of cutaneous and oral Kaposi’s sarcoma lesions. Eur J Cancer. 2007 Jul 10; 43:1877 –1882) and they may wish to quote this reference also. They used two HHV8 genes ORF73 and 26 and included both positive and negative controls throughout the assays. They have quoted gene banks and explained the sources for all their reagents and materials. They went out of their way to gain validity and repeatability.
4. The manuscript adhered to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition. They have used relevant references. They have quoted gene banks and explained the sources for all their reagents and materials. They used established assays where available and they went out of their way to gain validity and repeatability. compared their results with those of other studies.
5. Yes the discussion and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported by the data as I have explained above. However, the lack of previous published work on ORF26 qPCR reported in their discussion (2nd paragraph on page 10 pdf file) may not be entirely correct and they may wish to refer to our reference provided above (EJC, 2007) as well as others like it.

6. To some extent yes limitations of the work are clearly stated including inability to acquire commercially available HHV8 plasmids
7. Yes the authors clearly acknowledge the works upon which they are building, both published and unpublished.
8. Yes the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found.
SPECIFICS:

1. Major Compulsory Revisions: NONE

2. Minor Essential Revisions: NONE


The paper is well written and there were no typos.

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

**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