Reviewer's report

Title: Hepatitis B and C infection in haemodialysis patients in Libya: Prevalence, Incidence and Risk Factors

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Reviewer: Valentina Svicher

Reviewer's report:

This study is aimed at investigating the prevalence, incidence and risk factors of HBV and HCV infection in 2,382 haemodialysis patients in followed in 39 Libyan Centers. The topic is interesting, and the paper is clearly written.

The following points require more attention:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The authors used HBsAg positivity as marker of HBV infection. However, the use of this marker does not allow to include patients with occult HBV infection, that is defined by the presence of HBV DNA in the liver in the absence of HBsAg. In the absence of a highly sensitive assay for serum HBV DNA detection, HBcAb positivity is so far considered as a surrogate marker for occult HBV infection (please, see Taormina Statements 2010). At this regard, a recent paper led in Egypt was aimed at investigating the prevalence of occult HBV infection in hemodialysis patients. The authors detected HBV DNA in 6 of the 145 patients (4.1%) and HBcAb in 29/145 patients (20%) (Abu El Makarem et al., Hep Mo 2012). Thus, the authors should also provide results regarding the prevalence of HBcAb positive patients.

Discretionary Revisions

2. Did the authors check for HDV infection?

3. It has been shown that only 50 to 60% of patients with endstage renal disease achieve protective antibody levels following immunization against HBV (Fabrizi et al., 2003; Sali et al., 2008). On these bases, how many patients in this study were vaccinated against HBV, and were some vaccinated individuals infected by HBV during haemodialysis?

4. If possible, the authors could also provide the following information:

   - viral load in serum
   - level of transaminases
   - viral genotype

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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I have no competing interests