Reviewer's report

Title: Viral etiologies of lower respiratory tract infections among young children in an Egyptian children's hospital using three different laboratory methodologies

Version: 2 Date: 10 May 2012

Reviewer: Adriana Kajon

Reviewer's report:

This paper by Shafik et al reports the detection of respiratory viruses in nasopharyngeal specimens obtained from children presenting with symptoms of lower respiratory tract infection admitted to an outpatient clinic in Cairo, Egypt. This is an important body of work and the results of this study are of interest to the scientific community. The manuscript however presents a few problems and requires a major revision to address the following issues:

1-The text throughout the manuscript needs to be edited for clarity and elimination of redundant wording and correct use of idiomatic English.

2-For clarity and impact, consider revising the title of the paper to read “Viral etiologies of lower respiratory tract infections among Egyptian children under 5 years of age”

3-The Background section requires further elaboration to clearly describe what is known regarding the etiology of pediatric respiratory viral infections in other regions of the world and Egypt in particular.

What was the ultimate purpose of the study? To compare diagnostic procedures (this has been extensively done) or to utilize diagnostic procedures to determine the contribution of different viruses to the etiology of pediatric cases of LRTI in the region (this is novel and what readers are interested in)?

In the second paragraph of the Background section the authors refer to previous studies. Where were they conducted? In Egypt? If not, it may be better to reference a review on the topic.

In the last paragraph of the background section the word “role” should be replaced by “performance”

3-The paper would benefit from the description of the clinical presentations of the patients sampled. Were all 450 cases pneumonias?

4-Figures 1, 2, 4 and 5 should be replaced by tables to facilitate comprehension of the results.

5-In Table 1, it would be nice to see an added description of clinical diagnosis on admission unless all studied cases were pneumonias. As all the patients were sampled at the same clinic, what does the geographic area refer to? Area of
residence of the patient? The footnote of the table is not clear. It may be best to write a number for each category and describe in the footnote that this n represents the number of patients providing an answer to the questionnaire.

6- In the discussion at the top of page 6, the use of “previous studies” is confusing as the studies were not performed in Egypt. It may help to write “consistent with the results of studies conducted in other countries” or similar.

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no competing interests