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: 2 June 2012

Reviewer: Nobumichi Kobayashi

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions

1. This manuscript includes potentially important information on etiology of lower respiratory infections. In conclusion, RSV and adenovirus were found to be common causes. However, this was expected and not a novel finding. What results are considered to be characteristic to children in Egypt, comparing with data from developed countries and developing countries? Such discussions should be added, which may increase significance of this study.

2. In this manuscript, two major research items are included; (1) to identify causes of lower respiratory infections, and (2) to assess the methods for virus identification. However, this reviewer thinks that the inclusions of these two major aims have complicated the context and made focus of this study very unclear. This reviewer feels that the first part of the study, i.e., etiological study, should be the main content of this manuscript. There seems to be no novel finding in methodology to identify virus. It is a matter of course that rt-RT-PCR is the best among the methods authors employed. If any low-cost method was found to be effective and comparable to rt-RT-PCR, this is outstanding finding, and should be reported as a recommendable method, instead of rt-RT-PCR. However, such new methodological development is not described in this manuscript. If authors want to mention that some different methods were tried, this should be written briefly in the method section, and state which method(s) was used for identifying virus, as a final results. Therefore, authors should revise the manuscript considerably, especially strauctual arrangement of the contents.

3. Regarding results of identified viruses: Authors must describe which method was used to obtain the final identification of virus. Did authors used data of rt-RT-PCR only, or rt-RT-PCR and other additional method (when rt-RT-PCR gave no results, but the other method could identify the virus)? This point must be clarified and described in the text.

4. Figure 1 should be removed because it has duplicated information with Table 1. If authors want to include total numbers of identified viruses, this information can be added to Table 2, as an additional line at the bottom, as a total number.

5. Figure 4 and 5 should be deleted because methodological evaluation is not the main topic of this manuscript, as described above.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.