Reviewer's report

Title: Molecular Characterization and Antifungal Susceptibility Profile of Aspergillus flavus Isolates Recovered from Clinical Specimens in Kuwait

Version: 2 Date: 4 December 2012

Reviewer: Stephane Ranque

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions
  1. The title should be amended: I suggest using molecular identification rather that characterization (in the title and the manuscript).
  2. In the introduction, the authors should mention the epidemiological importance of A; flavus as a human pathogen (far before A. fumigatus) in Northern Africa, which climate is probably more like Kuwait than Northern countries.
  3. As fungal taxonomy is in progress, it is very important for the scientific community that the DNA sequences of these isolates are deposited in GenBank and that their GB accession no are mentioned in the manuscript. For the same reason and for the preservation of well characterized strains that might be used in further taxonomic or epidemiological studies, all the studied strains should ideally be sent to a fungal collection.
  4. The authors should explain how they collected these isolates. Indeed, they state that these 99 isolates have been collected over 18 years, which seems quite a long period of time.
  5. In the results/molecular characterization section: It is not obvious form Figure 1 that all strains from Kuwait clustered together. This should be clarified.
  6. In the discussion section: the discussion should be shortened. It is not relevant mentioning A. fumigatus azole resistance. In contrast the authors should cite Hadrich et al. (Med Mycol. 2012 Nov;50(8):829-34.) who correlate amphotericin B MICs and fatal outcome in patients with A. flavus invasive aspergillosis. I agree that voriconazole has addressed the issue of Aspergillus amphotericin B resistance in “rich” countries (such as Kuwait). Yet, amphotericin B remains the first line antifungal (and voriconazole is often not available) in many “poor” countries. Unluckily, I should say, in these countries A. flavus is the most prevalent Aspergillus species

- Minor Essential Revisions
  1. In the results/Disk diffusion test section: Figures 2 and 3 should be deleted. The regression curves equations should be deleted in the text (R square is enough).

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’