Author's response to reviews

**Title:** Enhanced surveillance of invasive listeriosis in the Lombardy region, Italy, in the years 2006-2010 reveals major clones and an increase in serotype 1/2a

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**Author's response to reviews:** see over
Dear Editor,

I am submitting the revised version of the manuscript by Mammina C et al. entitled “Enhanced surveillance of invasive listeriosis in the Lombardy region, Italy, in the years 2006-2010 reveals major clones and an increase in serotype 1/2a”.

I am attaching below the answers to the comments of reviewers.

I hope the manuscript in the present version could be accepted for publication on BMC Infectious Diseases.

Sincerely

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**Answers to reviewers**

**Reviewer:** Stephen Knabel

I have accepted and included (almost) all suggestions of the reviewer.

**Reviewer:** Brita Bruun

I have accepted and included (almost) all suggestions of the reviewer. I would like in particular to thank very much the reviewer for her patience, her lot of suggestions to cut the manuscript and her meticulous attention in checking the numbers.

To be short...I attach below my comments to the suggestions I have refused as a whole or in part:

**Background**

68-70. I think that when the surveillance of listeriosis in Italy is described, it is opportune to refer briefly to the surveillance system of CNS infections.

**Results**

214. The provinces of Lombardy are (at present) 12.

**Discussion**

300-3. The paragraph has not been displaced, because it refers to a report by Knabel et al. about cases of listeriosis occurring in Canada for a very extended period, which have been caused by a well defined strain.

**Fig. 2.** The headings and relative information in the figure have been modified in the first round of revision according with the suggestion of another reviewer.

**Reviewer:** Benjamin Silk

**Major compulsory revisions**

1 – The sentence about cluster detection as a public health tool is “universal”. Indeed, this is clearly not in use in the Lombardy routine surveillance system today. I added something to the conclusion (according with the suggestion of another reviewer), but I am no sure that is what the reviewer requests.

2 – No, the increase is not statistically significant, but the low numbers do not allow for a reliable assessment of this. The increase in serotype 1/2a is worldwide an issue of epidemiological interest.

3 – I have tried to cut the text according with the suggestions of all reviewers.

**Minor essential revisions**
1 – Done
2 – An outbreak of listeriosis is unlikely to be identified as such by health authorities and then investigated as a common source outbreak, i.e. looking for a common food exposure among cases. I acknowledge that the reviewer is skeptical about the zero efficacy of the outbreak investigation in Lombardy in the five years under study. But, if we convene about the inadequacy of the routine investigation methods when listeriosis cases occur and their link is no so obvious, the sentence the reviewer is citing is maybe more understandable.
3 – I have tried to change patterns and colors to avoid misunderstanding. I hope my attempt was successful.