Reviewer’s report

Title: Indeterminate tcdB using a Clostridium difficile PCR assay: a retrospective cohort study

Version: 2 Date: 21 March 2013

Reviewer: Abhishek Deshpande

Reviewer’s report:

This is a well written manuscript and addresses an important topic. It is fairly balanced with respect to literature critique, and draws appropriate conclusions based on currently available data. The authors do a nice job pointing out the current issues relating to CDI diagnosis using real-time PCR as well as stating the limitations of the study.

Major Compulsory Revisions

None

Minor Essential Revisions

Background section: PCR is more sensitive than toxin immunoassay, however the authors can use a more appropriate and recent citation (use citation 3 – Tenover FC). Vanpoucke H et al’s study evaluates 6 commercial toxin immunoassays and was done in 2001.

Discussion section: Please read the abstract again carefully. I would suggest: “Sunkesula et al recently showed that in a cohort of 26 PCR confirmed CDI patients on treatment, 4% of patients had converted to negative PCR within 24 hours which increased to 27% of patients after two days.”

Discretionary Revisions

Definitions can include definitions of cycle threshold with cutoffs and endpoint.

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 declare that I have no competing interests.