Reviewer’s report

Title: Analysis of mutations in the E6 oncogene of Human Papillomavirus 16 in cervical cancer isolates from Moroccan women

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Reviewer: Elena Burroni

Reviewer’s report:

The manuscript is well presented, written and discussed. This topic is really interesting because there are few data on HPV16 variants in North Africa, in particular in Morocco.

Minor essential revisions:

1) Many references are cited and possible differences among already published and present results are discussed, except for one point, authors have found a very high percentage of HPV16 positive samples in this population (87.29%), that is not in line with what reported in 2 Moroccan studies that they have cited (Lalaoui 2003 and Meftah El Khair 2010), so please add this in the discussion.

2) Background, page 3, line 7: the term “Human papillomavirus” has already been explained in the previous sentence so, please use only HPV

3) Some English errors, methods, page 4, line 19 change “Genecology” in “Gynaecology”; discussion, page 12, line 17 correct “somme” in “some” and page 12, line 18 “carnigenesis” in “carcinogenesis”

4) Methods, page 5, line 15, delete “specimens”, “fresh frozen tissue” is sufficient

5) Methods, page 5, line 20 please specify the quantity of the volume used to resuspended DNA

6) Table 1: GP5+/6+, MY09/11 and PC04 and GH20 primer sequences can be omitted from table 1 and references included in the text.

7) Methods: authors assess that they performed nested PCR to all samples, since the limits of nested PCR are well known (the major is the possibility of false positive results) I ask to the authors to explain why they didn’t sequence the fragment amplified by MY09/11 and didn’t perform nested PCR just in case of negative result for MY09/11.

8) Moreover, I appreciate the authors have performed twice the PCR amplification and DNA sequencing, but why didn’t they confirm the results obtained with GP6+ sequencing primer also with GP5+ primer?

9) Results: page 8, line 17 change GP5+/GP6+ in “GP5+/6+”

9) I suggest to the authors to adapt the classification showed on table 2 to the last classification of HPV16 variants (Cornet et al. 2013 Journal of Virology) (i.e.
Af1 reported on table 2 is better identified by Af1b) that they have mentioned several times in the manuscript.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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 declare that I have no competing interests