Reviewer's report

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

Version: 3 Date: 5 July 2013

Reviewer: Heather Cubie

Reviewer's report:

1. Major compulsory revisions
There are one or two statements which are too sweeping and not backed up by statistical evidence or power. In the Results section on p10, paragraphs 2+3, the statement that Af variants are mostly found in advanced cancers requires statistical comparison since the numbers are relatively small. Surprisingly, statistical analysis is only provided in relation to the association of different cancers and associated HPV16v with age. Such analyses are needed elsewhere. In addition, there might be other reasons for more advanced disease e.g. poor health and nutrition. How comparable are the groups of women with European, African and North American variants?

2. Minor essential revisions
2.1 P3 para 1: clarify whether cervical cancer is top or second most common cancer in women in Morocco – both are mentioned in the same paragraph.
2.2 P4 Clinical Specimens: spelling of Gynaecology/Gynecology
2.3 Materials and Methods are too detailed and could be cut (especially established PCR techniques for HPV genotyping and detection of variants where published methods can be referred to with only modifications detailed).

3. Discretionary Revisions
The Tables are helpful, but would be more readily followed if the percentages are either removed. Alternatively, linking them to proportions within a group of cancers (i.e. European or African) would match better with the text.

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