Author's response to reviews

Title: Low prevalence of Leishmania donovani infection among the blood donors in kala-azar endemic areas of Bangladesh

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Dear Sir,

We would like to submit our original research work entitled “Low prevalence of Leishmania donovani infection among the blood donors in kala-azar endemic areas of Bangladesh” for review in your highly prestigious journal. Visceral leishmaniasis (VL), also known as Kala-azar is a highly neglected tropical disease. It affects approximately half a million new patients each year world wide and 60% of them are from the Indian sub-continent. Mymensingh is the most endemic district out 45 affected districts in Bangladesh. Leishmania donovani (LD) has been found the only species causing VL in the Indian sub-continent including Bangladesh.

In 2005, the government of Bangladesh, India and Nepal signed a memorandum of understanding at the World Health Assembly in Geneva for the elimination of the disease by 2015. To implement this elimination program, Bangladesh currently are to manage the active VL and PKDL cases and to interrupt the disease transmission through vector control (reduce sand fly density) by the introduction of Integrated Vector Control Management. But they did not consider controlling other route of transmission of the disease such as transmission of VL through blood transfusion from healthy carrier of LD parasite. According to the available literature, transmission of VL through blood transfusion has been found to be occurred. But in Bangladesh, the risk of transmission of VL through blood transfusion is still unknown.

In our manuscript we showed that the risk for transmission of VL through blood donors is very low or absent. This is welcome news for national VL elimination programme since there is no need for routine screening for LD infection among blood donors in Bangladesh to interrupt the VL transmission. Thus the
manuscript contains very important information which may be useful for the policy makers of the kala-azar elimination program in our country.

The BMC Infectious Diseases has already become a very popular source of information for the policymakers in the developing countries. So we think that the BMC Infectious Diseases is the right choice through which the useful information derived from our original research work may reach to the VL experts and decision makers' of kala-azar elimination program in the Indian sub-continent.

Thus, it will be very encouraging for all us if you consider our manuscript for reviewing to your prestigious journal.

Thank you.

With our best regards,
Dr. Dinesh Mondal