Author's response to reviews

Title: Association of Trypanosoma cruzi infection with risk factors and electrocardiographic abnormalities in northeast Mexico

Authors:
Zinnia J Molina-Garza (molinazinnia@hotmail.com)
Jose L Rosales-Encina (rosales@cinvestav.mx)
Roberto Mercado-Hernandez (romercad@gmail.com)
Daniel P Molina-Garza (dpmolinagza@gmail.com)
Ricardo Gomez-Flores (ricardo.gomezf@uanl.mx)
Lucio Galaviz-Silva (lucio.galavizsl@uanl.edu.mx)

Version: 4 Date: 20 February 2014

Author's response to reviews:

Danielle Talbot
Executive Editor
BMC Infectious Diseases
February 20, 2014
Ref. #MS: 5132517210158063
Dear Dr. Talbot,

I would like to thank the reviewers for their careful and detailed critique of our manuscript, entitled “Association of Trypanosoma cruzi infection with risk factors and electrocardiographic abnormalities in northeast Mexico”. I have replied to each specific comment addressed by the reviewer and incorporated their suggestions into the revised manuscript where needed. I have also followed your recommendation to send the manuscript for English language revision by Edanz Editing, with the reference number G1402-5555-Galaviz-Silva, and have formatted the revised manuscript according to the style specified by the journal. I hope that this revision appropriately addresses the thoughtful and relevant concerns of the reviewers.

Yours sincerely,
Lucio Galaviz-Silva, PhD
Departamento de Zoología de Invertebrados
Laboratorio de Parasitología, Facultad de Ciencias Biológicas
Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León
San Nicolás de los Garza, NL, México.
Tel: (81) 8352-4425
In response to reviewer Jennifer Manne:

We are happy to present our detailed responses to this reviewer, because the issues raised by her are highly relevant and gave us an opportunity to improve the manuscript.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Language

- Under Epidemiological Survey change to: This model allows one to represent rural, suburban and urban regions according to the socioeconomic and cultural information reported by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI) [10].

This paragraph has been corrected as suggested (subheading Epidemiological survey; page 5, lines 17–20 of the revised manuscript).

- The following sentence is somewhat confusing, consider simplifying and revising: "The sample size taken by NSS was 3,747 inhabitants, but the size population, proportion by gender, age, and origin of the samples (rural, suburban or urban counties) was not reported, which might lead to a slight underestimate of prevalence in the population."

As suggested, this paragraph has been simplified:

“The sample used by the NSS included 3,747 inhabitants, but the origins of the samples (rural, suburban, and urban counties) were not reported, which might have caused us to underestimate the prevalence in the present study” (page 15, lines 2–4 of the revised manuscript).

2. Consider removing the word "significantly" from the sentence: Women of child-bearing age had a seroprevalence rate of 1.31% (data not shown), which suggests that congenital transmission may significantly contribute to the elevated infection rate in children. In addition, the authors could consider adding a sentence to this paragraph that notes this investigation of congenital transmission as an interesting area for future research.

In regard to the first concern, the word “significantly” has been deleted:

“Women of child-bearing age had a seroprevalence rate of 1.31% (data not shown), which suggests that congenital transmission may contribute to the elevated infection rate in children” (page 12, lines 18–20 of the revised manuscript).

In regard to the second concern (In addition, the authors could consider adding a sentence to this paragraph that notes this investigation of congenital transmission as an interesting area for future research), an appropriate sentence has been added to this paragraph:

“future research should focus on the investigation of congenital transmission” (page 12, lines 20-21 of the revised manuscript).

3. Consider removing the statement "Thus, it is possible that our findings
represent the first autochthonous cases of Chagas disease in Nuevo Leon, Mexico." It would seem to be prudent not to overstate the findings of your paper in the Conclusions section, especially given that the determination or characterization of autochthonous cases was *not* the stated objective of the study. The Conclusion statements used in the abstract are very good so it may make sense to rely more on those.

We fully agree with this comment, and this statement has been deleted. The sentence “These findings have important implications in northeastern Mexico, identifying T. cruzi-transmitted Chagas disease as a serious public health threat” has been added to the final paragraph (page 16, lines 3–5 of the revised manuscript).