Reviewer's report

Title: The epidemiology of hepatitis E virus in Africa

Version: 3 Date: 13 December 2013

Reviewer: Bernard Larouze

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Based on a systematic search in the bibliographical data bases (154 references in English and in French), this excellent comprehensive review is especially important given the recent availability of a vaccine against HEV and the insufficient awareness of the high HEV burden in Africa. The authors provide most significant up to date information and orientations for additional research aimed at better defining control strategies.

Comments. The authors may mention the risk of HEV infection for travelers to HEV endemic regions and the insufficient knowledge of the mechanisms responsible of the higher frequency of fulminant hepatitis when HEV infection occurs in pregnant women. They may mention as well the fact that, in pregnant women, fulminant hepatitis, occurs preferentially during the 2d or 3d trimester of pregnancy. More emphasize may be put on the obvious importance of improved sanitation as a basic measure for the control of HEV infection and other waterborne diseases. An in depth analysis of HEV quasispecies in the context of a large outbreak of non A non B which occurred in 1986 in eastern Algeria, retrospectively attributed to HEV, has been published in 2004 by Grandadam M. et al, Journal of General Virology 85: 3189–3194, but this virological approach may not be in the scope of the review submitted.

Level of interest: An exceptional article

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 interest