Reviewer's report

Title: The epidemiology of hepatitis E virus in Africa

Version: 5 Date: 8 May 2014

Reviewer: Behzad Hajarizadeh

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Minor Essential Revisions:

1- The authors reported some findings which are needed to be discussed in “Discussion”:
   - Page 7, line 9: “The seroprevalence seems to be higher in pregnant women than in the general population in Ghana (28.7% [78] vs. 4.6% [76]) and also in Gabon (14.2% [73] vs. 0% [72]).” What could be the explanation of higher prevalence in pregnant women compared to general population? Fatality rate is expected to be higher in pregnant women but how the higher prevalence in pregnant women could be explained?
   - Interesting findings has been reported in “Co-infection with other infectious diseases” section but it has not been discussed in “Discussion”.

2- Page 8, bottom of the page: “However, assuming that hepatitis outbreaks characterized by acute jaundice and a high CFR among pregnant women were likely due to HEV, Teo identified earlier, probable HEV outbreaks in Tunisia from 1950 to 1953, Algeria from 1952 to 1956, Congo in 1958, Morocco from 1958 to 60, and Libya from 1968 to 1970 and also in 1975 [23].” Stronger evidence is needed to support this statement. This statement has been repeated in the beginning of discussion as well.

3- Figure 2 is confusing. Is this figure supported by table 5? If it is the case, some of the studies in table 5 assessed only sporadic cases (some assessed a single case) which are not representative. Is the data coming from studies assessing the distribution of different genotypes in a population with a reasonable size? If this is the case, a pie chart for each country showing the prevalence of each genotype is preferred. For example look at two following papers mapping the distribution of HCV genotypes in different countries:

Discretionary Revisions:

1- In terms of prevalence of HEV, The authors could consider excluding the studies with a small sample size (for example n<50) given the prevalence rate reported from a sample size has low external validity, even when there is no
selection bias.
2- The authors could consider reporting 95% CI for each prevalence reported in table 1.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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