Reviewer's report

Title: Hospital-based HIV/HSV-2 seroprevalence among male patients with anal diseases in Korea

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Reviewer: Nicholas J. Van Wagoner

Reviewer's report:

In the manuscript entitled, Hospital-based HIV/HSV-2 seroprevalence among male patients with anal diseases in Korea" the author present epidemiological finding for both HIV and HSV-2 in their colorectal hospital. They make the case that diagnostic rates are higher among patients presenting with anal disease than in patients presenting with non anal diseases. Thus targeting men presenting with anal disease for HIV screening could increase HIV diagnoses.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. English grammar is incorrect throughout the manuscript making the manuscript a challenge to read. I would advise finding a good copy editor to ensure accuracy not only in grammar but also to ensure that accuracy of meaning is also conveyed to the reader.

2. Background: I would suggest working to establish your rationale more clearly. Why would men with anal disease be more likely to have HIV. Is it related to sexual practices among men who have sex with men? Is there another reason? As well, the purpose for presenting data on HSV-2 is unclear to me.

3. Methods: It is unclear to why you chose to stratify by age groups. Please make this clear.

4. Methods: Statistical Analysis: You included under intestinal disorders hemorrhoids, anal fissure and anal fistula. What about perianal condyloma and squamous cell carcinoma of the rectum? Were this included? If not why not since both are associated with receptive anal sex. What disorders were included in the control group? Also, what cut off did you use for HerpeSelect seropositivity?

5. Line 117: I suspect you are missing "non" before anal disease.


7. Results: I believe that it is an important finding that younger men 10-19 had the greatest likelihood of HIV diagnosis. This warrants further focus in the discussion.

8. Results: Lines 150-151. My interpretation of this is that only 1 patient was coinfectected with HIV and HSV-2. If this is the case, why would the epidemiology be different in Korea than elsewhere?

9. Discussion: The case is made for a strong association between anal disease and HIV infection in men presenting to the colorectal hospital. It would greatly strengthen the manuscript if you had behavioral correlates. If you captured
sexual behavior (i.e. sex with women or sex with men) or specific sex acts and could correlate with your findings, the manuscript would be stronger. Alternatively, if stigma associated with same sex sexual behavior is high and most men are unlikely to tell their health care providers about their sexual orientation, then screening in the facility offers a way to improve yield.

10. Discussion: Lines 193-195. I would show this data.

11. Discussion Lines 201-204: Review for clarity. Are you saying that there are specific lesions associated with HIV or that HIV prevalence is higher is men presenting with certain complaints?

12. Discussion Lines 211-214: Why is seroprevalence so much lower in this Korean Population?

13. In its current state, I do not understand the purpose for including data related to HSV-2. A stronger case for its inclusions needs to be make.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.