Reviewer's report

**Title:** The correlation between the presence of viremia and clinical severity in patients with enterovirus 71 infection: a multi-center cohort study

**Version:** 2  
**Date:** 4 March 2014

**Reviewer:** CHia Yin CHong

**Reviewer's report:**

1. Question well-defined? Yes
2. Methods appropriate and well-defined- Not ideal as patient had variable time-frame of doing viral loads and each pat only had 1 viral load performed during the admission. (was noted as a limitation in this study) What % of pats fell into HFMD, herpangina and fever with no obvious focus categories?

   How was 2011-2012 considered epidemic years? Do the authors have the denominator for total country’s HFMD notifications for those 2 years?

   165 pat had no viremia- was this because they presented late in the illness or were they the febrile patients with no obvious focus? Ideally the patients should also have had antibody testing for preceding EV 71 infection

3. Data sound: yes

4. Relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes. Study was approved by review board in National Taiwan University Hospital, how about the other sites?

5. Discussion and conclusions- Table 3: since majority had mild complications – grade 2, was there any statistical difference when comparing mild (grade 1,2) with severe (grade 3,4)? Were there any deaths in the cohort? Was there any difference in the management of pats between the hospitals? What was the outcome of the patients? The authors used an age cut-off of 3 yrs, was there a greater difference using an age cut-off of 2 yrs or even 1 yr when comparing risk factors for viremia? Did the authors compare viremia with other characteristics e.g. duration of fever, other clinical symptoms or signs, other laboratory findings e.g. leukocytosis?

6. Limitations are described

7. Yes

8. Yes

9. Writing acceptable: typos on page 12- viremia persistence; page 20- statistical analysis performed

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

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests: I declare that I have no competing interests