Reviewer's report

Title: Single infection of human bocavirus 1 with a high viral load is associated with severe respiratory tract infections in previously healthy children

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Reviewer: Linlin Li

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Major Compulsory Revisions

This study investigated the role of HBoV1 in children’s respiratory tract infection in China and found ~ 10% positives in 1229 NPA samples collected during 12-2009 to 8-2013. It also studied the HBoV1 co-infection with other commonly seen respiratory viruses and the association between HBoV1 virus load and severity. It enlarged our knowledge of HBoV1 in children’s respiratory infections. Nevertheless, the data presentation is somewhat confusing. The authors should work on a more clear and precise way to present the data.

1 Three methods qPCR, nested PCR and cell culture were used to detect virus pathogens. PCR screening was performed for all 15 viruses and viral culture was performed for 7 viruses.

What is the point of virus cell culture here but making things more complicated? Did you perform cell culture on all 1229 samples? If not, how did you select the samples for cell culture? In line 167-168: “The PCR results were 168 positive for #1 virus in 53.1% of the children, and the viral culture results were 169 positive in 23.4%.” It indicated that cell culture was performed for All samples and All viruses. For CPE positive samples, PCR has to done to know what virus(es) were there. Does that mean virus nucleic acids you used were not only extracted from PNA samples directly but also from the virus-cell suspensions?

2 Table 1, 2 and 3 should not be in the supplementary material. Instead, Figure 1 and 3 can go to the supplementary data.

3 With only 18 HBoV1 (+) SRTI cases available, it is speculative to make any conclusion about the association of HBoV1 and SRTI. The statements such as “there was an association between HBoV1 single infection at a high viral load and SRTI” and the title “Single infection of human bocavirus 1 with a high viral load is associated with severe respiratory tract infections in previously healthy children” were not appropriate.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
None.