Reviewer's report

Title: Clostridium difficile carriage in hospitalized cancer patients: A prospective investigation in eastern China

Version: 2
Date: 6 August 2014

Reviewer: Yuankai Shi

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript entitled “Clostridium difficile carriage in hospitalized cancer patients: A prospective investigation in eastern China” by Fang et al included 400 patients with cancer to investigate the potential clinical or laboratory factors that were related to C. difficile carriage in cancer patients.

The manuscript includes some novel data; mainly the authors used the two cut-off values of 50 years old and 10 days of hospitalization, the 400 cancer patients were divided into four groups and analyzed the positive rates of C. difficile in the various groups, and tested the association of parameters (the albumin level, white blood cell count, and concentrations of PGE2, TGF-#, and IL-10) that are important immunological indicators for cancer patients with C. difficile carriage.

Yet, major corrections are required to improve the manuscript:

1. Line 35-36: The “Methods” was not well described and too simple.
2. Line 91: What criteria were used to define diarrhea (references)?
3. Line 118-122: The detail information of manufacturers for PGE2, TGF-#, IL-10 immunosorbent assay (ELISA) kits should be given.
4. The information of the primer pairs for PCR ribotyping should be displayed.
5. The study displayed that younger patients as well as those with longer hospitalization stays and lower albumin counts may be more prone to C. difficile carriage. This point is interesting but is not extensively commented by the authors.
6. This rate#20.5%# is much higher than that (12.6%) reported in non-cancer patients in a similar study in 2009 in eastern China#do the authors have data of C. difficile-positive rate of the non-cancer patients in the same period to compare?
7. Please write “P/p” value in uniform and standard type.
8. The English is poor, the authors should re-write or re-edit their manuscript in standard English.

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: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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