Reviewer’s report

Title: Dynamic comparison between Daan real-time PCR and Cobas TaqMan for quantification of HBV DNA levels in patients with CHB

Version: 2 Date: 9 December 2013

Reviewer: Bruno Pozzetto

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The important changes performed by the authors are acknowledged by the referee who agree with most of the answers made to the different questions raised by the two reviewers.

However I am still worried by two points that I consider as major compulsory revision, at least for the first one.

1) The stratified analysis presented in Table 2 is not satisfying from a methodological point of view. First, the choice of the 30th and 60th percentile is totally arbitrary; what would happen if other figures had been chosen (20/80, 10/90)? Second, it is not possible to select a technique (Cobas) as gold standard for classifying the samples and then to use it again for comparing the mean levels; EITHER no gold standard is chosen and the two tests can be compared OR the Cobas is used as gold standard and the sole results of the Daan test are presented. Third, the statistical comparisons are only valid on the quantitative data and undetectable results must be excluded. In conclusion, I suggest to remove this Table that adds nothing to the general conclusion of the paper: good agreement between the two tests despite a lack of sensitivity of the Daan test by comparison to Cobas. The only interesting point raised by this Table is the best linearity of the Cobas test for high values. This can be analysed separately on the subgroup of values above 7 log10 IU/ml.

2) Given than the Daan test is much less performing that the Cobas one, it is clear that its advantage is mainly its cost. Even if the authors do not provide a complete cost-effectiveness study, it could be interesting to discuss more in depth the place of this test for managing patients chronically infected by HBV in China. In other words, we need the opinion of the authors about the Daan test. Are its performances too weak for using it in clinical practice or is there still a place for this test in China given its relative low cost? If yes, in which conditions?

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:
No competing interests