Reviewer's report

Title: External decontamination of wild leeches with hypochloric acid

Version: 2 Date: 27 April 2004

Reviewer: Joerg Graf

Reviewer's report:

General
The investigators are commended for responding thoroughly and quickly to the issues raised by the reviewers. The addition of the figure clarifies the location from which the bacteria were isolated. In particular, the new identification represents a strong improvement that will help to clarify the scientific literature about the leech microbiota.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
none

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
none

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
As an aside for subsequent studies by the investigators I wanted to point an interesting result out. In Table 2 the authors present the biochemical data which is great because it allows others to compare it to their own results. A key test that is used in the species identification, the esculin hydrolysis, correlates 100% with the identification as A. veronii bv sobria. While a direct comparison is not possible, in our study IAI 67:1-7, we found similar strains that were positive for esculin and 16 S rRNA gene sequencing showed them to be A. veronii bv sobria. Similar problems with the esculin test were described by Wang et al in JCM 41:1048-1054. While it is beyond the scope of this study, 16S rRNA genes sequencing would be an interesting addition that is beyond the scope of the present study but would be exciting to pursue in the future.

What next?: Accept without revision

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
none