Reviewer's report

Title: A new method for determination of varicella-zoster virus immunoglobulin G avidity in serum and cerebrospinal fluid

Version: 1 Date: 9 July 2004

Reviewer: Oliver Liesenfeld

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. The authors must analyze whether the increase in sensitivity of their assay for csf samples impacts the specificity.

2. What are the positive predictive and negative predictive values of their assay?

3. The authors should explain how a linear correlation between absorbance values with or without denaturing agents is determined experimentally. The text does state that software determines experimentally derived data points. How many tests have to be made to determine slope, intercept and how many dilutions of sera? IThis point is of major importance since linear correlation is a requirement for the success of their approach and the authors state that their method may be superior to other more laborious methods.

4. The figures suggest that the correlation between absorptions with and without denaturing agents is not linear at very low levels of absorption. The authors should comment on the effect of this.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

None