Reviewer's report

Title: Older age does not influence CD4 cell recovery in HIV-1 infected patients receiving Highly Active Anti Retroviral Therapy.

Version: 2 Date: 5 July 2004

Reviewer: G. Paolo Rizzardi

Reviewer's report:

General
This reviewer understands the reasons and efforts the Authors are producing to ameliorate their manuscript. However, there are still some issues that need to be solved before publication.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
The Discussion section should be revised focusing on the main novel messages, instead of being the copy of the already published manuscript (AIDS 2003, 17:128-131).
Figures 1-3: The data presentation is still inaccurate (for e.g. use of dots and commas for decimals and "log" instead of "log10" in Fig 3) because number of valid cases and SD values are presented only for cases and not for all time-points reported. Finally, the comment about not reporting SD values in Fig. 2 because this slide shows 6-month CD4 T cell count increments is not acceptable. The Authors should clearly indicate in all figures number of valid cases, mean and SD values (or 95% confidence intervals) for all time-points for both cases and controls. It is stated that a 1:2 ratio is used for inclusion of cases and controls, respectively. This should be checked also throughout the follow-up, and in case of selection bias, a "last-observation-carried-forward" analysis could be applied to strengthen main conclusions.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
see comments for Fig 3: y-axis label; SD should be indicated graphically (not in numbers)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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: