Reviewer's report

Title: Spectrum of clinical disease in a cohort of 135 hospitalised HIV-infected patients from north India

Version: 1 Date: 17 May 2004

Reviewer: Roger Detels

Reviewer's report:

General: Interesting and relevant paper. Needs some revisions and editing for English usage and typographical errors.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached): discussion needs to reflect the nature of the populations.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct):

Was 135 the total number of patients admitted or included in the study?

Were there any refusals to provide risk or other data?

The authors attempt to establish that this distribution of patients seen in a tertiary hospital reflects the distribution for all HIV infected individuals in India. This is unlikely. Conditions causing rapid death would be unlikely to be transported to Delhi. The actual referral to the tertiary hospital depended on the referring physicians. Patients living closer to Delhi were more likely to be referred than patients from the Northeast States, the south and large cities with their own referral hospitals.

The order of illnesses in Table 2 should go from highest to lowest to assist the comprehension of the reader.

The Figures should be numbered in the sequence in which they appear in the narrative.

The authors have not commented on the high proportion of transfusion-related cases.

The authors refer to their patients as a cohort. It would be more appropriate to refer to them as a series as they were not followed up beyond their hospital stay.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

None