Reviewer's report

Title: A novel pancoronavirus RT-PCR assay: frequent detection of human coronavirus NL63 in children hospitalized with respiratory tract infections in Belgium

Version: 1 Date: 15 November 2004

Reviewer: astrid vabret

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)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1 : in the chapter "Methods", "isolates" have to be defined, are they supernatants of cell culture, and what cell culture ? It's important to know if there is a first amplification by culture before molecular diagnosis

2 : it would be useful to know from which samples the positive results are obtained : pharyngeal swabs, nasopharyngeal aspirates,....

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
1 : why do you include patients with old age if you want to explore the incidence of HCoV-NL63 infection in children ?
2 : it would be useful to know which others respiratory viruses circulated in this period, not only RSV, but also influenza viruses, rhinoviruses,.... do you have this data ?

What next?: Accept after minor essential 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:

I declare that I have no competing interests