Reviewer's report

Title: Human papillomavirus infections in women seeking cervical Papanicolaou cytology of Durango, Mexico: prevalence and genotypes.

Version: 1 Date: 29 June 2005

Reviewer: Alejandro M. Garcia-Carranca

Reviewer's report:

General
The authors have performed an analysis of 498 cervical samples from women seeking Papanicolaou examination in three public centers in Durango, Mexico.
Although the authors did found a low proportion of cases that were positive for HPV DNA, as low as has been reported for countries like Spain, it is however intriguing to this reviewer, to know what the exact limits of sensitivity for PCR assays are in their hands. This data could should be provided and would help. Also, no mention of controlling quality of extracted DNA is provided.

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

The authors does not describe in detail the conditions used for their PCR analysis, in terms of quantities of DNA, primers, nucleotides and Mg used for the reactions. They also does not describe the sequences of the primers used for genotyping HPV DNA. They could show any representative gel.
Most importantly, they dont even mention that a control (beta-globin?) was performed to assess the quality of the extracted DNA, without this, it is not possible to judge their PCR results.

It is intriguing the high percentage of samples that were positive to HPV type 16 DNA (75%).

What are the real values and limits of detection of HPV DNA in their samples?
Could they show any representative result and a sensitivity curve?

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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)

Minor points

In Table 2, TOTAL number appears as 484, while it should read 498.
Table 3 and 4, they should not used percentage, since there are very few cases, they should refer as proportions (2 out of 3 HSIL samples should not be stated as 66.7 % but instead as a 0.667 proportion)
In same Table 4, HGIL and LGIL shoul be labeled as HSIL and LSIL, respectively.

Abstract and Background sections should be corrected to take into account the numerous studies performed up to date with mexican populations (however, little is know about the molecular epidemiology of the HPV in Mexico....) which is clearly false. For previousi studies with mexican populations, see Berumen et al., Lazcano et al., and many others.
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
Improve the language, needs some corrections.

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

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
"I declare that I have no competing interests"