Reviewer's report

Title: Sp110 transcription is induced and required by Anaplasma phagocytophilum for infection of human promyelocytic cells

Version: 3 Date: 29 August 2007

Reviewer: J. Stephen Dumler

Reviewer's report:

General

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

The authors have responded adequately to 2 of the 3 comments. However, I do not see how the author used the delta delta CT method in Figure 1. The correct application of this method is dependent upon initial normalization of transcription in infected and uninfected cells compared to the beta actin control (endogenous reference). After that, the relative transcription in infected vs. uninfected cells (the calibrator) is compared to yield a "fold change" change curve, not distinct curves for infected and uninfected cells as is currently provided. It's unclear to me that this has been done since 1) the axis is labeled "normalized Ct values" instead of "fold change", and since the data is represented by two lines. It appears that the author has erroneously displayed the delta Ct values only - that is values of transcription compared to the endogenous reference beta actin. If the true delta delta Ct method has been used, the data should be displayed as described above. If the delta Ct method has been used, it will underestimate the actual change in transcription, but could be displayed as is as long as the text adequately describes what was really done - it currently does not.

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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