Author's response to reviews

Title: Incidence of Human Herpesvirus 8 (HHV-8) Infection Among HIV-uninfected Individuals at High Risk for Sexually Transmitted Infections

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Author's response to reviews: see over
To
Dr. Chrissie Kouremenou
Senior Assistant Editor
BMC – Series

Rome, August 13, 2007

Reference: MS: 3452481921244804 – “Incidence of Human Herpesvirus 8 (HHV-8) Infection Among HIV-Uninfected Individuals at high Risk for Sexually Transmitted Infections”.

Dear Dr. Chrissie Kouremenou,

I have attached the revised version of manuscript no.3452481921244804 titled “Incidence of Human Herpesvirus 8 (HHV-8) Infection Among HIV-Uninfected Individuals at high Risk for Sexually Transmitted Infections” modified according to the reviewers’ comments and suggestions. I have also provided below our answers to the reviewers’ requested changes and the point-by-point list of the modifications which we have included in the manuscript.

Sincerely,

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Reply to reviewers’ comments from
Dr. Massimo Giuliani
(Corresponding author of manuscript #3452481921244804)

Reviewer # 1 Philip Pellett
Major compulsory revisions
Point 1.
In the abstract, the text and Table 2, we have included confidence intervals for all incidence rates. Some parts of the text have been changed in light of CIs. On page 12 the phrase “However, among heterosexuals, the sieroincidence was lower…” has been removed.

Point 2.
To control the robustness of seroincidence data, the HHV-8 antibody positivity was confirmed, using serum samples collected for the sequential HIV-antibody test, among 52 of the 72 individuals found to be HHV-8 positive at recruitment. These data have been included in the Results section and in the discussion of biases of the study.

Minor Essential Revision
Point 1
The article by Hladik et al. has been cited in the manuscript in the context of transfusion-transmission of HHV-8 (Reference #23).

Point 2
Yes. Persistently HHV-8 negative means negative in at least two successive tests. The terms “persistently negative” is commonly used in seroincidence studies.

Point 3
Thank you for your suggestion. These was an error; the correct lower value is 0.4 (0.38 years).

Discretionary Revision
Point 1
In the Abstract we have added the sentence: “During the study period the HIV-1 incidence was lower than that of HHV-8 among both groups (0.89 per 100 p-y among MSM and 0.95 per 100 p-y among multiple-partner heterosexuals). The previous last sentence “HHV-8 occurrence did not appear to differ between multiple-partner heterosexuals and MSM”, has been deleted.

Reviewer # 2 Jordi CASABONA
Minor Essential Revision

In the text on page 5, we have better describe the characteristics of the study site by adding the sentence: “The study site is the largest STI clinic in Rome, Italy, with documented expertise in STI screening and control programs target to at-risk populations.”

As suggested, we have added some important articles to the References section.