Reviewer's report

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

Version: 3 Date: 5 September 2007

Reviewer: Philip Pellett

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a nicely responsive revision. The authors have considerably strengthened the statistical foundation for their conclusions. The result is indeed interesting.

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

The point is well-made that the differences in HHV-8 seroincidence between men and women is not statistically significant. The paragraph at the bottom of p. 12 and the last paragraph of the Discussion are worded as though the association is hard fact.

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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. There is inconsistency in the expression used for “per 100 person years”. In the abstract, “x” is twice used instead of “per” which is the inverse of what is meant. On p. 7, it is written as “per 100/person year.” I prefer “##/100 p-y”. Pick something that makes sense and use it consistently throughout the paper.

2. p. 5, 8 lines from the bottom. “an important”

3. p. 8, 7 lines from the bottom. “assessed”

4. p. 12, top line. “assess” to “found”.

5. “seroreversion” to “seroreversion” (p. 13, 2 lines from the bottom and Table 3 title)


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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
“Efficiency” of infection is a complex concept that goes beyond incidence (paragraph beginning “The finding that” on p. 13). Among other things, it involves community prevalence, infectious concentration in bodily fluids, volume of fluid transferred, frequency of fluid transfer events, and method of infection at the portal of entry (receptor availability, need for injured skin, etc.). I don’t think a case has been made for more efficient infection by HHV-8, but agree with the second conclusion in the sentence.

Instead of “the follow-up period” (p. 7, 7 lines from the bottom), how about “time-to-seroconversion period”? Connected to this, is the definition of “follow-up” on p. 9 (3 lines from the bottom) as stated on p. 7, or did you use the time of the last tested specimen here?

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests.'