Reviewer's report

Title: Using BOX-PCR to exclude a clonal outbreak of melioidosis

Version: 2 Date: 15 May 2007

Reviewer: Antonio Correia

Reviewer's report:

General

1. This article intends to respond to the need of quick and inexpensive methods to investigate the clonal origin of B. pseudomallei isolates. The problem here addressed is relevant: melioidosis is endemic in several Asian countries and Australia and its causative agent has been considered as a potential agent for biological warfare.

2. The title and the abstract adequately address the question and the most relevant finding of this work.

3. The research work is straightforward. The methodological approach uses well established techniques and takes advantage of the information already available concerning the consistency of several molecular typing methods used for discrimination of strains belonging to other Burkholderia species.

4. The data here presented are strong enough to support the use of BOX-PCR as a method to quickly establish the genetic relatedness of strains in situations when urgent responses are needed from the public health authorities.

5. Figure 1 is perhaps difficult to interpret by readers without specific knowledge in the area but I'm not able to find a simpler representation of the data.

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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. "Methods" section, "Data Analysis" subsection, last sentence: inadequate citation format; include the reference on the references list.

2. "References" section: no author for reference #4; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is the institutional author.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Data on the reproducibility of the technique could be useful.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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