Reviewer's report

**Title:** Response to M. tuberculosis RD1 selected peptides in Ugandan HIV-infected patients with tuberculosis

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 10 September 2007

**Reviewer:** Claudio Fortis

**Reviewer's report:**

**General**
The paper from D. Goletti et al. reported on the response to RD1 selected peptides in HIV/TB co-infected patients from a TB endemic area. This is a pilot study performed on a very small number of individuals. Notwithstanding this, the results are interesting and suggestive of the potential role of RD1-based assays for the diagnosis of active TB in HIV-infected subjects.

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

**Patients and Methods:**
- It is not clear where the tests have been performed (in the laboratory of Kampala, Cleveland or Rome) and whether fresh or frozen PBMC have been used (using frozen cells the sensitivity of the ELISPOT assay is reduced).
- It is not clear whether a positive control, like a mitogen, has been used in the ELISPOT assay.
- The two cohorts studied are not homogeneous in term of CD4+ T cells/ml (55% of active TB subjects have <200 CD4/ml while 80% of subjects with no active TB have >300 CD4/ml).
- No data on antiretroviral therapy are reported.

**Results:**
- page 8, line 8, “one patient was deemed anergic to M. tuberculosis…”: to be sure the patient was really anergic should be better to have a positive control (like a mitogen) in the ELISPOT assay.

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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)**

- Page 6, line 20: the sentence “subjects without TB” should be corrected in “subjects without active TB” (in an area endemic for TB most controls could be latently infected).
- It is not reported where Figure 4A/B should be located in the manuscript.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**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 importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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' below