Author's response to reviews

Title: Leptospirosis in the Asia Pacific Region

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Author's response to reviews: see over
REVIEWER NATARAJASEENIVASAN

This article may be substantially improved with the following additions, because the title is specifying “Leptospirosis in the Asia Pacific Region”, but the review is only describing about surveillance, epidemiology and control. So the review may be directed in the following aspects i) epidemiological niches, ii) transmission prototype, iii) outbreak situations iv) clinical signs and symptoms v) patho-physiological changes vi) incidence and prevalence vii) treatment protocols, viii) diagnostic events ix) control measures etc. of various geographical regions of Asia Pacific countries. This will strengthen the review and new informative for the researchers. Otherwise the title should be changed as per the content of the manuscript.

We disagree respectfully but strongly with this comment. This is information that is already available and not related specifically to the Asia Pacific region. What the reviewer appears to suggest would be a major monograph. However, if the Editor insists, we can change the title to: “Leptospirosis in the Asia Pacific Region: surveillance, epidemiology and control”, although we would strongly prefer to retain the original title. To emphasize this point, we have replaced reference 1 with a very recent 2009 review which covers these general aspects of leptospirosis.

Some of relevant photographic data may be supplemented for epidemiological situations, which makes the article more interesting for reading.
We do not understand what is meant by “relevant photographic data” We believe that we have presented all the relevant data.

Data may be tabulated in a comparative format and may be discussed.
We have now included a summary table of incidence in the region where data are available.

It is obvious that the data were pooled from various publications and sources, so the method part may be modified by the way the compilation has been carried out rather indicating the source.
We do not understand what the reviewer is getting at here. Stating a method without defining the sources is scientifically unsound.

In the prevention and control, the prophylaxis for leptospirosis is to be highlighted much, because that is the only possible mode of prevention in countries like India during the outbreak situations.
While prophylaxis may have applications in certain circumstances such as outbreaks or short term exposure, it is not used routinely. However, we have added an additional paragraph under Prevention and Control to address this comment.
**REVIEWER PICARDEAU**

p.3 « The spectrum... » & p.8 « III. Prevention and control » : authors should emphasize that leptospirosis can be misdiagnosed, due to its wide spectrum of symptoms mimicking the clinical signs of many other diseases, including dengue fever and malaria.
Agreed. We have now emphasized this point in both places in the text.

p. 4, The Institut Pasteur of Nouméa is (to my knowledge) not a WHO Collaborating Center.
Our apologies. This error has been corrected.

p. 8 « III. Prevention and control » : the authors should also mention the poor sensitivity of the standard diagnostic tests.
We respectfully disagree with this comment. The authors are experts in this area and are of the agreed opinion that the MAT is a sensitive and specific diagnostic test.

A map of the region showing aeras of low- or high- endemicity (where the epidemiological data were most reliable) would be informative. Alternatively, a Table summarizing the reported/estimated number of cases (including the more prevalent serovars/srrogroups when possible) / countries would be helpful.
We have considered this, but after consultation with additional WHO epidemiology experts have concluded that the lack of solid incidence data for many countries makes an incidence map not feasible and indeed misleading. Instead, we have included a summary table as suggested.

The epidemiological data appears to be imprecise : for example, authors should indicate data for 2008 in Australia. In New Caledonia, the reported number of cases over the last 10 years are not indicated. In Futuna Island, a high alert status has been declared these last years.
We have updated the data for 2008 for Australia and included more recent information on New Caledonia.

**REVIEWER YAN**

In the first instance, we had some trouble following what this rambling review was about.

1. Please summarize the current major pathogenic leptospiral serovars or genotypes in Asia Pacific region and their major animal hosts that having high risk to populations in different courtiers.
We are puzzled by this comment. This is precisely what we have done.

2. Please summarize the recent advancement about the pathogenic leptospires-specific protein antigens in the manuscript.
This is not relevant to the review. This is not a review about leptospiral outer membrane proteins or vaccines, which have been reviewed separately in recent years (References 62 and 63). At any rate, to our knowledge no protein-based vaccines have been developed. However, we have replaced reference 1 with a very recent 2009 review which covers these general aspects and includes a review of protein antigens.