Author's response to reviews

Title: Intestinal parasitic infections in relation to HIV/AIDS status, diarrhea and CD4 T-cell count

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Sir/Madam,

The authors would like to thank the reviewers for their valuable and constructive comments on our manuscript (Manuscript ID 9827264202807827). As advised by the reviewers we have made substantial amendments in the revised manuscript. We hope that the reviewers will assess the revised manuscript for the amendment and offer us additional advice and assistance.

Regards,

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Author’s responses to Reviewer 1 (Mirko Paiardini) Comments

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. We agree that the study was not designed longitudinally to provide detailed information about the effect of parasitic infection on immune profile. Rather we tried to assess if HIV infection and the level of immune status influences prevalence of parasitic infection. We have pointed out the limitation of this study in the discussion part and we have also tried to revise our conclusion appropriately.

2. Yes, the paper will benefit if we are able to measure the levels of Ki-67 as advised. Unfortunately, this study was conducted with limited resource; achievable objectives were set accordingly.
Minor Essential Revisions

1. Your comment to add P-value in table 3 and 4 is well taken and appropriate changes have been made in the revised manuscript.

Author’s responses to Reviewer 2 (Jacob Estes) Comments

1. Yes, we created ambiguity as we were attempting to describe the methodology part as short as possible. Your comment is now well taken and we have tried to re-write the methodology as concisely and clearly as possible. Moreover, this study was carried out tangential to the routine activity of the hospital in order to utilize generated data and minimize associated cost. That was the reason we stated the log book as a source of data.

2. Your comment about the previous table 1 is well taken and it is now omitted; but we have described its pertinent findings in text form.

3. Your comment on table 3 is accepted and appropriate amendment is made in the revised manuscript. Perhaps you did not see it but the significant difference in rate of parasitic infection by HIV status was described in the manuscript as “Among HIV positive subjects, 59.8% (128/214) were infected with one or more intestinal parasites compared with 48.8% (80/164) of HIV negatives. This difference was statistically significant in multivariate analysis (OR =1.9; 95% CI 1.2 to 3.1.”

4. We would like to thank you for showing us a direction in describing table 4. Amendment is now made both in the result and discussion part.

Author’s responses to Reviewer 3 (Zvi Bentwich) Comments

Yes, it will be beneficial if we explore what effect de-worming has on CD4 T-cells. Unfortunately, this study was conducted with limited resource and there was no chance to extend it. The study was designed to provide baseline information on the effect that HIV may have on the prevalence of parasitic infection. In our opinion, the result of this study not only re-affirms the existing facts but also adds information in the process to resolve unsettled issues. For instance, the view that HIV infection changes the integrity and functions of intestinal barrier so that it favors intracellular and mucosal parasites and discourages establishment of luminal and extracellular parasites is only partly supported by this study. Moreover, the predominance of S. stercoralis among HIV infected subjects is not something, which has already got a conclusion as evidences are conflicting. Above all, the strength of interaction among infections may vary depending on their epidemiology and immune status of the population for instances. Thus,
investigation to see the exact picture of interaction in each locality benefits the particular area.