Reviewer’s report

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

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Reviewer: Zvi Bentwich

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Background and Objectives: This study has tried to address the question whether parasitic infections can be correlated to HIV status, diarrhea and CD4 levels. It was a cross-sectional study carried out in one hospital in Ethiopia. The study was carried out between November 2008 and March 2009 and included 378 participants-214 HIV positive and 164 HIV negatives. The main novel objective of the study was to see if higher levels of parasitic infections are present in HIV positive patients that may indirectly support the role of parasitic/helminthic infections in the pathogenesis of HIV.

Results: The results of the study were overall disappointing in not revealing something that was not expected or not known before, namely – that with HIV infection there is higher prevalence of parasitic infections, dominantly protozoal infections, most of which are typical opportunistic infections. At the same time, helminthic infections, were generally not more prevalent in the HIV positive population, aside from S. Stercoralis, which in any case is not a dominant infestation. The findings that infection with multiple parasites was more common per patient and that the proportion of patients infected with these parasites correlated with CD4 levels among the HIV positives, is again not surprising and not novel.

Major Compulsory Revisions: I don’t think the results of this study are novel or unexpected. The only value of the study lies in stressing the importance of parasitic and helminthic infections in HIV infected patients. Therefore, the article in its present form may only be published as a short communication in the Journal. However I do recommend that the authors consider extending the study and exploring the effects of eradication of the parasites on these infections and on the CD4 levels post treatment. This would then be of possible greater impact and importance and would then be considered for publication as a revised full manuscript.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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'