Reviewer's report

Title: A Changing Picture of Shigellosis in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam; Shifting Species Dominance, Antimicrobial Susceptibility and Clinical Presentation

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Reviewer: Hidemasa Izumiya

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A Changing Picture of Shigellosis in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam; Shifting Species Dominance, Antimicrobial Susceptibility and Clinical Presentation

The authors study about trends in shigellosis in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam for three distinct periods during 1995-2008. They describe the change of species dominance, drug resistance and severity of infections.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The authors should make the points clear, and should provide only the essential results. There are a plenty of data presented in the manuscript, which include interesting points. However, the contents of some of Figures and Tables overlap. Please try to reduce them. I think at least Figures 4 and 5 are not necessary.

2. I do not think that it is important to explain each of the three studies in detail. Alternatively, they should explain how relevant the combined usage of three period data is. And more epidemiological information should be provided; are all the patients in this study sporadic? are there any outbreak of Shigellosis during the periods? These factors could affect distribution of species and resistance. Namely, one large outbreak can change the distribution.

3. The term of "Study" seems to be confusing as this study used data and isolates from three collections of previous studies. "Period" or "Group" should be preferable.

4. Line 255-, I think Table 2 is enough, and it would be better to analyze data of S. sonnei and S. flexneri in separate since trends in resistance, especially for traditional antimicrobials, seemed to be different from one another. Change of species distribution may account for that of resistance. For example, resistance to chloramphenicol became high in S. flexneri and low in S. sonnei though the periods. Increase in resistance to nalidixic acid seemed to be common for both, which may have something to do with usage of fluoroquinolones in treatment as discussed in the manuscript. Ampicillin resistance among S. sonnei seemed to increase transiently in period B. I wonder if the authors could have any suggestions for it.

5. Line 288-, changing in severity of clinical features is interesting. But it is difficult to evaluate it because no control can be provided. Is the change specific for shigellosis? How about other food- or water-borne diseases? Economic
and/or social changes in Vietnam may have to do with the change. I also wonder if the results of Table 4 were consistent when comparing the data of the species in each period.

Minor Essential Revisions

6. Line 176, quality control strains such as ATCC25922 should be declared.
7. Line 204-216, can be integrated into Methods.
8. Line 237, is the wet season May and September, but not from May to September?
9. Fig2 and 3, what do red and gray bars and curved line indicate?
10. The name of species, dysenteriae, flexneri, boydii, and sonnei, should be written in small letters.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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.