Reviewer’s report

Title: Co-infection by human immunodeficiency virus type 1 (HIV-1) subtype c and human t cell leukemia virus type 1 (HTLV-1): does immune activation lead to a faster progression to AIDS?

Version: 1 Date: 7 July 2009

Reviewer: Carlos Brites

Reviewer’s report:

This interesting manuscript describe the findings of a study on the impact of coinfection by HIV and HTLV on immune activation of affected patients. Although the numbers are quite modest, the results seems to be consistent, and suggest a role for immune activation guided by coinfection on faster AIDS progression. Some minor questions may improve the clearness of the results:

- how the patients were selected? Were they selected from a larger cohort, or consecutively included in the study? Why controls were not matched like coinfected patients? In a blood bank there are many health donors and it would be easy to do;

- what would be the mechanisms of immune activation caused by HTLV? In discussion section, it would be very important to approach this point.

- The authors said stool examination would rule out other potential causes of immune activation, but there is no information on clinical characteristics of the patients. Were they presenting any opportunistic infection during the study period? It could be a potential cause of immune modulation.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.