Reviewer's report

Title: Herpes simplex virus type 2 seroprevalence and risk factors among men who have sex with men from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: a cross-sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 3 December 2008

Reviewer: Loredana Sarmati

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Authors’ objective was to determine with a cross sectional study the seroprevalence and to evaluate the correlates of HSV -2 infection on stored sera obtained from men who have sex with men from Rio de Janeiro. The results showed an high prevalence (higher than 40%) in this subjects population that resulted correlated with other sexual transmitted infections (HBV and syphilis), with older age and black race, with unprotected sex and with have a stable partner from no more than 6 month.

On the whole the work don’t add new informations to what it is just known about the transmission of HSV and in particularly HSV type 2. There are many published articles which demonstrated that HSV-2 infection is significantly and independently associated with years of sexual activity, history of previous STDs, number of sex partners, number of pregnancies, number of induced abortions, and the percentage of sex acts involving receptive anal intercourse. Otherwise studies on HSV 1 and 2 transmission in European population from many countries (Sex Transm Infect 2004;80:185–191) showed an HSV 2 seroprevalence of at most 20%. Higher was the percentage of HSV-2 seropositive sex workers (79.0%) in Singapore (International Journal of STD & AIDS 2006; 17: 395–399). Some data are also known about the HSV-2 seroprevalence in Brazil (The Journal of Infectious Diseases 2002;186(Suppl 1):S3–28) that resulted higher than in Europe but very variable from a place to another.

Little is known on HSV2 infection in the gay HIV-seronegative subjects. A recent study on an Australian cohort of HIV-negative gay men (JID 2006:194, 1 561-70) showed a low seroprevalence of HSV 2 infection.

Major

1. The HSV 1 seroprevalence of the study population
2. The HSV 1 and 2 seroprevalence of the female population of Rio de Janeiro (HSV 2 is usually prevalent in female)
3. If there was the possibility to know if there were ethnic differences in this group of subject that could have different HSV 2 seroprevalence
Minor
Pag 4 1° phrase: new test don't permit to evaluate the presence of HSV in absence of clinical symptoms (this fact is true in any case) but to differentiate antibodies to HSV 2 from those to HSV1

**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'