Reviewer's report

Title: Abdominal Ultrasonography in HIV/AIDS Patients in Southwestern Nigeria

Version: 1 Date: 21 June 2007

Reviewer: Enrico Brunetti

Reviewer's report:

General

This is an interesting prospective study with quantitative evaluation of sonographic findings in a cohort of HIV-positive patients in Subsaharian Africa. As such, it is an important contribution from an area where AIDS is rampant and very few diagnostic tools are available and it emphasizes the central role of ultrasound in these settings.

The fact that there are very few such studies adds to the interest of this paper. The Authors point to a number of data similar to those from other sonographic studies also conducted in Subsaharian Africa, while the absence of focal lesions is credited to HAART.

Importantly, the lack of needles and cytohistological evaluation seriously impairs the high diagnostic yield of ultrasound when it is used as a guide to fine needle aspiration biopsy of focal lesions and other masses.

While I hope that more studies like this one will be submitted in the future, there are a number of minor points that need to be addressed:

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Page 1 – Final paragraph:

The purpose of a prospective study cannot be “the review of the literature”.

Page 4 – Discussion

Line 27 “Density “ is not an appropriate term in sonography: Replace with echogenicity or echotexture or similar terms

Line 28 Replace “were homogeneous” with “had homogeneous liver echotexture” or similar.
The quality of English should be improved, especially with regard to punctuation.

Pictures.

I think a picture of gallstones in a non-HIV patient (n. 2) is of no use in this paper. Some other images, more typical of the findings described (e.g. dilated biliary ducts, lymph nodes, etc) could be used instead.

Picture n. 3 should be replaced with a one of better quality.

Finally, there are a number of misspellings in the references, so they should be carefully reviewed.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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