Reviewer's report

Title: Severe course of Lyme neuroborreliosis in an HIV-1 positive patient; case report and review of the literature.

Version: 3 Date: 28 August 2010

Reviewer: John J Halperin

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The authors have addressed my concerns admirably. I have just 3 remaining issues.

1. On 2 occasions (lines 36 and 157) they refer to “biologic” recovery. I believe they mean “microbiologic”.

2. In lines 158 and following, they refer to “sequelae commonly....”. I think the word “commonly “ is potentially misleading as most systematic studies show these sequelae to be infrequent. I similarly think the statement that “neurologic sequelae are more frequently found in patients in whom treatment is delayed” is potentially misleading. True neurologic sequelae (as opposed to nonspecific symptoms in the absence of evidence of nervous system damage) ensue when a nervous-system-damaging event occurs. The longer the patient has the infection, the greater the opportunity for such an event to occur. If a facial palsy occurs on day 3, there can be permanent sequelae. If it occurs on day 90, sequelae are neither more nor less likely. Similarly for the very rare event described here – encephalitis.

3. The conclusion that Lyme encephalomyelitis may be more severe in HIV infected patients can be neither proven nor disproven by one case report. This disorder is very rare. The fact that it occurred in one patient with HIV is very interesting, but cannot be taken as proof of the assertion. A more appropriate conclusion might be “When focal encephalomyelitis occurs in an area endemic for B burgdorferi infection, this infection should be considered as a rare possible cause. This case raises the possibility that this disorder might be more severe in immunocompromised individuals, such as those with HIV infection.”

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

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