Reviewer's report

**Title:** Tanzanian malignant lymphomas: WHO classification, presentation, ploidy, proliferation and HIV/EBV association

**Version:** 4  **Date:** 14 April 2010

**Reviewer:** Claudiu V Cotta

**Reviewer's report:**

Here are some new criticisms:

1. In Abstract, Results, it is not clear what the denominator of the 22 (13.7%) and 24 (15.4%) is. I assume it is the 158 cases of ML reviewed, but it is not stated clearly at this point in the manuscript.

2. In Background: “Ki-67 expression of tumor cell proliferation….” maybe “Ki-67 expression by proliferating tumor cells…” would be more accurate?

3. Methods, Microscopic evaluation: “Olympus BX60, Tokyo” maybe adding Japan?

4. Results, Clinical Presentation P0.000898, please insert =

5. Results, Clinical Presentation: Again, it is not clear what the denominator of the percentages is. Example: “45.5% (n=153)”. Is this the number of cases with supradiaphragmatic presentation expressed as % of total cases? But there is no data available for all the cases (and hence the percentage should be calculated using the cases with known clinical history as denominator). Also, later on the authors mention that some cases upon review were identified as non-lymphomas. Are these cases excluded from the denominator?

6. Results, FC results: “Overall, 40% (24/60) of the NHL cases showed….” do the authors mean “Overall, 40% (24/60) of the ML cases showed…”?

7. Results, FC results: as the malignant cells have not been microdissected and as in HL these cells are usually a small minority of the specimen, maybe no statement should be made regarding the ploidy of the HL.

8. Discussion: see point 7.

9. Table 1: are the cases that were diagnosed as non-lymphoma included?

10. Table 2. See point 9.

11. Table 3. See point 9.

12. Figure 3. I will not argue with the authors about the CD30 or EBER status of the neoplastic cells in NLPHL (the current WHO classification of tumors discusses these aspects). I only think that removing part f of figure 3 would generate less controversy regarding the diagnosis of NLPHL.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.