Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of a single round polymerase chain reaction assay using dried blood spots for diagnosis of HIV-1 infection in infants in an African setting

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Reviewer: Davide Gibellini

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The paper by Chohan and co-workers evaluate a single round PCR technique applied on dried blood spots achieved from paediatric patients. The paper is well written and is convincing. It is noteworthy the correct comparison between this PCR and commercial PCR approach that demonstrate the effectiveness of method. The analysis of specificity and sensitivity is well described and the conclusions are appropriate.

I would indicate only two minor revisions:

1. The Authors claim that their method shows good sensitivity and specificity results even in HIV subtypes such as A, C and D (page 9 lane 4-6). It is important to show these results in the paper to demonstrate the flexibility of the assay in the identification of different HIV subtypes.

2. It would be interesting to report the specific HIV subtypes present in the tested paediatric samples (these data may be exhibited with a table, for example) and to analyze if the absence of HIV detection in some blood samples with known HIV-1 status may be related to specific HIV-1 subtypes infecting the patient.

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.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.