Author's response to reviews

Title: Characteristics and risk factors for symptomatic Giardia lamblia infections in Germany

Authors:

  Werner B Espelage (werner.espelage@bfr.bund.de)
  Matthias An der Heiden (anderheidenm@rki.de)
  Klaus Stark (starkk@rki.de)
  Katharina Alpers (alpersk@rki.de)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer: Lucy Robertson

1) In the background data it is stated that Assemblage isolates consists of 2 distinct clusters. The authors should check the literature, as I believe that 3 clusters have been described (AIII being predominantly associated with wild hoofed animals). However, my main complaint is that the next sentence suggests that human isolates are only AlI or B. Although this may have been the case in the study cited, in numerous other studies AlI has been found in human isolates, and thus the impression given by this sentence is misleading.

My suggestion for this paragraph is that the final 2 sentences of this first paragraph of the background are deleted (don’t bother to mention about the sub-genotypes AI, AlI, and AIII) and are replaced with a comment that attempts to associate symptoms with genotype in human infections have not provided a definitive answer to date. There are numerous papers which could be used to reference this statement; I suggest a review paper, or a paper which discusses several of the published studies on this theme, is most suitable to use as a reference.

- Thank you very much for this advice. We deleted the final 2 sentences of the first paragraph of the background section. The following comment was inserted: “Attempts to associate symptoms with genotype in human infections have not provided a definitive answer to date”. Two appropriate review articles have been added to the references.

2) There are now 2 figures in this manuscript that were not included in the first review. I believe that the information would be more usefully conveyed if the figures could be combined. If not, I suggest that figure 2 is deleted as this information is not terribly useful. The age distribution is the same as in the infected as they were age-matched, so the only difference is the sex distribution and this is already stated in the text.

- We kept figure 1 to provide more detailed information about the age and sex distribution of the cases. We deleted figure 2.

3) The language continues to be below the standard that I think would be expected in an international journal. Obviously the authors are not native English speakers (although they claim to have had the text revised by a native English speaker), but indeed some of the readers of the manuscript also may not be native English speakers, and therefore getting the text as accurate as possible is important. The problems are mainly with tense (e.g. it is written ‘travel-associated cases were more likely to travel to…..’ but what is meant is ‘travel-associated cases were more likely to have travelled to….‘), phraseology, and use of punctuation (full stops, hyphens, apostrophes). There are rather many of these mistakes otherwise I would list the places requiring correction. I think that a native English speaker is not sufficient for correcting a scientific manuscript: you need a native English speaker who is acquainted with writing scientific manuscripts.
We used a professional copy editing service (http://www.biomedes.co.uk) for this second revision.

Reviewer: Kristine Mørch
Reviewer’s report:
• No revisions required.

Reviewer: Ryan Lennon
Reviewer’s report:
General
1) Page 11
“This showed that women are more likely to do gardening than men and are also better protected by this. Both sexes are unlikely to eat green salad daily, but men eating salad are at higher risk (Table 4).”
The results in Table 4 do not show that women are more protected by gardening, or that men are at higher risk from eating salad daily. There are trends, perhaps, but not significant results presented to support that statement. You cannot compare p-values to say that one group is at higher risk than another - such a statement requires a formal test of interaction. You can see by looking at the 95% confidence intervals, that it is certainly possible that men benefit from gardening more than women, and that women might be at a higher risk from eating salad than men.

• Thank you for this comment. We deleted the last paragraph of the results section as well as Table 4. As stated in the last sentence of the modified results section no interaction between relevant exposure variables was found.

2) Page 8
"insignificant variables, We excluded" - should have a period instead of a comma

• This mistake was corrected and the manuscript has been proof read by a professional proof reading service.

3) Page 9
“(p<0.000)” should be “(p<0.001)"

• We corrected this.

4) Page 10
"and to own pets (35%) compared to controls." - recommend changing to "and to own pets (35%) compared to travel-associated cases."

• Thank you for your comment. We changed the sentence.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.