Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 5 November 2009

Reviewer: Lucy Robertson

Reviewer's report:

I believe that this is an interesting manuscript that deserves publication. This is the second time that I have read it, and the revision is an improvement on the original submission.

However, I do have a few further comments to make that I believe should be addressed before publication. Thus, all the comments below are minor essential revisions.

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 AII or B. Although this may have been the case in the study cited, in numerous other studies AI 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, AII, 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.

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.

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.

**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:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests