Reviewer's report

Title: Respiratory virus in immunocompetent community-acquired pneumonia: is it real pathogen or a bystander? Comparing to influenza like illness and healthy volunteers

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Reviewer: Bin Cao

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The report is interesting, which is designed to answer whether RVs are bystander of pathogenic in CAP patients by etiological comparison of CAPs, ILIs and healthy controls. Authors found RVs in 34.9% of 149 CAP patients, 81.5% of 27 ILIs. Previous studies included outpatients without respiratory complaints or asymptomatic controls, while, 75 healthy volunteers served as controls in the study, and no RV positives. These results are encouraging, which suggests that combination of RV detection and clinical judgment could be helpful for the diagnosis of viral CAP.

However, although three methods have been used for RV detection, throat swab sampling might reduce the sensitivity, which should be discussed in limitation. On the other side, 58 RVs have been identified (18 by culture, 47 by NATs and 20 by serological tests), what is the possible reason for the inconsistent results between different detection methods?

No routine detection of bacterial and atypical pathogen is another big limitation, since the authors could not answer whether RV is main cause of CAP, or exclude the prolonged shedding of RV.

In my opinion, “virus strain” could be isolated by culture system, but not by NATs or serological tests, which should be rephrased.

It is reported that leukocytosis is less common in viral infections compared to bacterial infection, however, only comparison between viral infections and viral negative patients has been conducted, therefore, the authors could not say “It was the same in our study” in discussion.

Comparison of RV etiological pattern with the results previously reported from the nearby places (eg: Hong Kong) should be discussed.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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