Reviewer's report

Title: High-risk human papillomavirus (HPV) screening and detection in normal, healthy patient saliva samples: a pilot cluster randomized study.

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Reviewer: tarik gheit

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The goal of this study was to perform HPV screening of normal healthy adults to assess oral HPV prevalence. HPV16 DNA was found in only 3.9% of the adult patients (4/102), which is very low compared to other recent studies reporting a rate of 20% in the oral cavity (SahebJamee et al., 2009).

Three of the four HPV16 positive samples were from Hispanic patients. These results provide new information about oral HPV status, which may help to contextualize results from other studies demonstrating that oral cancer rates are increasing in the US among both females and minorities and in some geographic areas.

Minor Essential Revisions:

Comment 1: How can the authors explain the fact that the Hispanic women minority is more susceptible to HPV16 infection compared to the other minorities?

Comment 2: Why did the authors use one microgram of DNA to perform the PCR? This unusual quantity is very high and could even inhibit the PCR and decrease the HPV16 prevalence, or generate unspecific signals. The authors should provide the picture of the agarose gel.

Comment 3: The oral cavity is susceptible to contaminations from many infectious agents in the external environment. In order to demonstrate a productive HPV16 infection, is it possible for the authors to check for the HPV16 RNA?

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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