Reviewer’s report

Title: The Pattern of Orofacial Clefts at Bugando Medical Centre in Mwanza, Tanzania

Version: 1 Date: 11 September 2010

Reviewer: Eduardo Castilla

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MAJOR COMPULSORY

(Paragraph refer to author’s answers to Reviewer 2)

The essential drawbacks of the material analyzed in this manuscript remain the same.

The authors confuse “hospital-based” with “clinic-based” data. Hospital-based are cases observed in a consecutive series of hospital births; while clinic-based is a series of cases, consecutive or not, preselected or not, seen at one or more given hospital clinics. The selection is of the former approach being much less than the latter. For instance, concerning laterality (Paragraph i), bilateral cases are more likely to seek medical and surgical hospital care, than unilateral ones, mainly in developing areas, where not all oral clefts are treated in hospitals.

Showing similar phenotype distribution than expected from the literature (Paragraph ii) does not prove soundness of data since combinations of several suspected and unsuspected biases can compensate themselves.

Authors do also mix the concepts of associated and syndromic cases of oral clefts when blaming the low proportion of associated cases to the lack of access to a geneticist in the medical team (Paragraph vi). Observed frequencies do probably reflect differential mortality rates among cleft cases associated with anomalies in vital internal organs.

I still think the manuscript cannot be improved because of its materials. Furthermore, while it is true that data from Africa is needed, this manuscript does not contribute to fill this vacuum.

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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