Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of direct antiviral activity of Deva-5 compound and extracts of five Asian plants against Influenza A Virus H3N8.

Version: 1 Date: 17 January 2014

Reviewer: Sandra Adams

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Major Compulsory Revisions
1. I have a major problem with the logarithmic representation of viral titer (lg10 PFU/ml). This is not the accepted means of reporting titer. Instead, the titer should be reported as $10^n$ PFU/ml. Also, a clearer explanation is needed for the following statement of Results in the Abstract “The extracts of …. reduced the titre of A/Teal/Tunka/7/2010 (H3N8) by 0.7-0.9 lg10 PFU/ml (p#0.05), which indicates a 4–6 fold decrease in viral infectivity.”

Minor Essential Revisions
2. I disagree with the statement that M.cochinchinensis is well tolerated by MDCK cells at concentrations 1% or less. This statement is not supported by data reported in Figure 2.

3. There are minor problems with usage throughout the paper that need to be corrected. For example, the medicinal properties of Deva-5 are characterized in the Background as being used to treat “infectious heat” (not an accepted expression of a disorder). In the discussion authors state that it is used to “cure fever”. Do the authors mean that Deva-5 is used to treat infections diseases that cause fever? This section is critical in establishing a rationale for testing Deva-5 in terms of traditional medicinal uses. Neither usage (infectious heat and cure fever) is standard and both are ambiguous.

4. There are also numerous instances of incorrect verb tense. Additionally, the last statement in the Conclusions should be re-stated. Following is another example of a usage error: “should be studied deeply”.

Discretionary Revisions
5. Authors state in discussion that their preliminary study showed bacterial inhibition. They did not lay groundwork to deviate focus from antiviral properties to bacterial inhibition (S. aureus). A better transition statement is needed. Authors need to show the relevance for including this in the Discussion. The final statement in the paragraph does make a case for studying Deva-5 and its components as antimicrobial agents, but because the reader does not know what is meant by “infectious heat” or “cure fever” (see comment #3), the rationale for including this is not apparent.
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: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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