Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 20 March 2014

Reviewer: Maja Nowakowski

Reviewer's report:

This study is a useful attempt to quantify specific antiviral effects of a traditional remedy, Deva-5, and its plant-derived components. The authors modified their manuscript in response to reviewers’ comments and improved the manuscript.

1. The authors clearly define the question addressed by their experiments testing the direct antiviral activity of a traditional compound Deva-5 and extracts of Deva-5 components. This does not include the molecular and phylogenetic analysis of the virus strain used, H3N8. Therefore, it is still suggested as Minor Essential Revision that the authors include in the discussion a statement they made in response to this reviewer’s comments: “The virus strain used in our study was previously characterized in very restricted set of experiments. Therefore, we sequenced the HA and NA genes to exclude possible misidentification of virus subtype or misplacement of virus stock. The genetic identification of virus subtype was performed by phylogenetic analysis in comparison with reference strains of each subtype”. This would adequately address our earlier concern: “A major concern is the considerable effort and space devoted in this work to the molecular and phylogenetic analysis of the virus strain because the data obtained are not discussed in relation to the rest of the work and no rationale is given for performing this extensive analysis. This part of the manuscript should be more fully integrated and its relevance to the rest of the work should be clearly explained”.

2. The methods are described in detail and are adequate.

3 - 4. Overall, the data appear to support the authors’ interpretation and are discussed critically. The manuscript meets general standards. The authors modified Figure 2 and Figure 4 and corresponding text, and these modifications are acceptable.

5 - 7. The results describing antiviral effects are discussed in detail. The limitations of the work are stated, and results are related to earlier published work and the authors’ preliminary results. The only additional limitations to discuss would include the complex nature of each extract and the need for further analysis to identify the active components within each extract.

8. The title and abstract adequately reflect the work on anti-viral effects of Deva-5 and its components.
9. The writing is acceptable.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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.