Reviewer's report

Title: Touchdown General Primer PCR and Optimized Sample DNA Concentration Support the Sensitive Detection of Human Papillomavirus: Investigation of Cervical, VAIN, and Breast Tissues

Version: 2 Date: 28 September 2005

Reviewer: Philip Castle

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. I still fundamentally disagree with the title. Strike the verbiage beyond the colon. The point of the paper is the method, not the tissues. The relationship between breast cancer and HPV is quite uncertain. Even though you argue (with reviewer 1) that the rates are comparable (somewhat less) than those found by de Villier et al. However, this paper is detecting an entirely different set of types, types found in the cervix, whereas the types detected by de Villier et al were primarily skin types. This makes me suspicious of contamination. And, given the differences in the cell types, I am more inclined to believe the de Villier paper but I have no evidence that what was done in this paper was wrong. However, I disagree with the use of "Breast" in the title, which emphasizes a role of HPV in breast cancer. I cannot relent on this issue.

2. The authors did not evaluate reliability, despite their claims. There are two measures of reliability, intra- and inter-laboratory reliability. That is, do they get the same answer on repeat assays and will another lab also get the same answer. It is a limitation that just need to acknowledge...i.e., they have not assessed it.

3. Another limitation that I would like the authors to acknowledge the absence of a negative tissue control.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

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