Reviewer's report

Title: Housing equity for health equity--A rights-based approach to the control of Lassa fever in post-war Sierra Leone

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Reviewer: Elisabeth Fichet-Calvet

Reviewer's report:

The article describes the situation of Lassa fever in Sierra Leone, and its links with poverty, particularly the housing quality. There is an historical review of the situation and a suggested pilot study in Eastern SL to improve the housing quality as a key measure to decrease the incidence of LF. This article fits with the scope of the journal and with the “Debate” format, presenting an argument not based on practical research.

Nevertheless, the format required by the journal is not respected since there are not subsections such as “background”, “discussion” and “summary”, either in the abstract or in the main text.

Please present your text according to the guidelines of the journal.

Major compulsory revisions

The presentation of Lassa fever epidemiology is supported by old references, which need to be strongly actualized. For example, why not to use the more recent findings performed, in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Mali and Nigeria?

Please, use several of these references to make the introduction:

- Demby et al. 2001, VBZ
- Omilabu et al. 2005, EID
- Lecompte et al. 2006, EID
- Fichet-Calvet et al. 2007, VBZ
- Fichet-Calvet & Rogers 2009, PloS NTDs
- Safronetz et al. 2010, EID
- Ehichioya et al. 2010, EID
- Hadi et al. 2010, EID
- Ehichioya et al. 2011, J Clin Biol.

Remove figure 1 and refer to the Lassa risk map published by Fichet-Calvet & Rogers (2009). Although a new case of Lassa was discovered in South Mali (Atkin et al. 2009, Safronetz et al. 2010), the disease is certainly not widespread in the North of the country, in the middle of the Sahara.
Remove figure 2, the photo of the live animal being certainly another species than Mastomys natalensis. Furthermore, the resolution of the photo is very bad.

Among the 22 references, 9 are issued from the grey literature (reports, meeting abstract, news) which are not valid to support a scientific article.

Minor essential revisions

The authors state that “the highest incidence of LF in the world” occurs in SL, based on a partial literature done in 1970 or 1983! Please, moderate this argument according to the recent studies performed in Nigeria where many Lassa cases occur each year.

This is also incorrect to suggest that the rodent population “is infected up to 50%” as if this was the rule. In McCormick, the global viral prevalence in Eastern region was 11% (153/1364). For more information see also Demby et al. 2001 (6% in savannah and forest regions), Lecompte et al. 2006 (13% in savannah and forest regions) and Safrometz et al. 2010 (24% in one village).

Authors’ contributions: I don’t believe that all authors contributed equally to conceptualize and write the manuscript. Please, fill this section according to the role of each.

**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