Reviewer's report

Title: Acute illness associated with Ehrlichia sp. P-Mtn from Atlanta, Georgia, USA: a case report

Version: 2  Date: 7 February 2008

Reviewer: Laurel Garrison

I am familiar with the literature and believe that this case meets one of the 7 criteria for evaluation in the journal: Presentations, diagnoses and/or management of new and emerging diseases

Has the case been reported coherently?: Yes

Is the case report authentic?: Yes

Is this case worth reporting?: Yes

Is the case report persuasive?: Yes

Does the case report have explanatory value?: Yes

Does the case report have diagnostic value?: No

Will the case report make a difference to clinical practice?: No

Comments to authors:

General Comments:
A very nice case report of the first ever documented human infection with the Panola Mountain Ehrlichia. However, the argument would be stronger had the tick been appropriately preserved for testing and tested positive as well.

Revisions necessary for publication:
1.) To my knowledge, this is the first report to use the name “Ehrlichia sp. P-Mtn” to describe the Panola Mountain Ehrlichia. I would suggest using the name “Panola Mountain Ehrlichia” for consistency, or including a statement about the different name.

2.) This case does not technically meet the CDC surveillance case definition for infection with Ehrlichia sp. It meets the laboratory criteria, but fails to meet the clinical criteria. If using the 2000 case definition, fever or rash is required, and if using the 2008 case definition, fever is required. Re-phrase the last sentence of the introduction to state that this case meets the laboratory criteria only.

3.) The table is not necessary since the patient’s CBC results were all within normal limits.
4.) Why are convalescent IgM data not available for the patient? If this test was not performed, please state that.

**What next?:** Accept after minor revisions

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable