Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Fulminant herpes simplex hepatitis secondary to tongue piercing in an immunocompetent adult: a case report

**Version:** 4  **Date:** 15 May 2008

**Reviewer:** Markus Schneemann

I am familiar with the literature and believe that this case meets one of the 9 criteria for evaluation in the journal: Unexpected or unusual presentations of a disease

**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?:** Yes

**Will the case report make a difference to clinical practice?:** Yes

**Is the anonymity of the patient protected?:** Yes

**Comments to authors:**

This case raises one important point that should be dealt with a bit more detailed: that is the transmission of herpes simplex virus through tongue piercing.

To strengthen this, please try to incorporate the following data into your report:
- How long was the incubation time? Time from piercing to first symptoms?
- Do you know the type of herpes simplex virus, type 1 or type 2?
- Other possible routes of infection excluded or unlikely: sexual? iv drug use?
- Ethnic background, geographic history of the patient (could be relevant, since some populations are not exposed to certain viruses as children)

I found a recent review which should be included:

Herpes simplex virus hepatitis: an analysis of the published literature and institutional cases.
Norvell JP, Blei AT, Jovanovic BD, Levitsky J

The public health issue of body piercing should be mentioned, see for example: Am J Infect Control. 2001 Aug;29(4):271-4.

Body piercing as a risk factor for viral hepatitis: an integrative research review.

Hayes MO, Harkness GA.

The discussion & conclusion sections are somewhat redundant in description of their same details. Please shorten, and use the space for the issues raised (herpes virus type, mode of transmission, public health).

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:

Besides serving as associate editor to the JMCRI I have no competing interests.