Reviewer’s report

Title: Unexplained chronic liver disease in Ethiopia: a cross-sectional study

Version: 0 Date: 21 Dec 2017

Reviewer: Monica Robotin

Reviewer’s report:

This is a well written paper, describing a carefully conducted study into the aetiology of chronic liver disease in Ethiopia.

The fact that no aetiological factor for CLD could be established for over half of the study participants is disappointing, but not entirely surprising.

Could the authors comment of the implications of using HBsAg as a biomarker for HBV infection rather than HBV DNA to estimate chronic HBV infection?

In patients with HCC (rather than chronic liver disease), a review by Bosch et al mentions that HBV DNA in the serum was detectable in the serum of 25.1% of patients without any HBV markers (Bosch et al, 2004). This is in line with earlier reports using samples from three geographical world regions (South Africa, Europe and Japan), prompting the authors to conclude that in countries with low levels of exposure to HBV, between a third and a half of the HBsAg-negative liver cancer cases may be related to HBV (Paterlini et al, 1990). Similar results were observed for HCV infection, as close to 15% of HCC cases were negative for all three viral markers of HCV infection (Brechot et al, 2004).

REFERENCES:


Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes
Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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