Reviewer’s report

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

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Reviewer: Bhavana Bhagya Rao

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting study from a resource deplete institution, that tries to determine the prevalence of various etiologies for chronic liver disease (CLD) in their population. However it has shortcomings as follows:

It is unclear why the authors have excluded patients with prior diagnosis of chronic liver disease and only included the incident cases.

Were all the described serological, microbiologic, biochemical tests performed on all of the study subjects?

What percentage of study subjects received liver biopsy? How was it determined as to who would receive liver biopsy? Did any of the patients who had an identified possibly etiology, undergo liver biopsy to confirm that etiology?

In Table 2, testing the statistical difference in demographic characteristics between the etiology known and unknown group does not carry much clinical relevance. The authors could remove the significance column from the table.

A comparison of the clinical symptoms, laboratory features between the etiology known and unknown groups also does not carry much clinical relevance.

Tables maybe listed at the bottom of the manuscript, after the references, rather than within the text.

The results of the study are limited by the substantial number of patients with unknown etiology who did not get subsequent liver biopsy.

The diagnostic criteria for NASH used by the authors is quite non specific and may have led to significant errors in estimation of prevalence.

While authors say that the prevalence of unexplained CLD is higher in Ethiopia, once could argue that that is significantly impacted by the lack of the gold standard liver biopsy and histopathologic analysis in these cases.
While the authors comment that the use of khat was very frequent among the CLd patients, this study does not include a control group where khat use can be compared. Hence no conclusions regarding any possible association of khat use with CLD can be made with this study.

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

No

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

No

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

No

**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

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