Author’s response to reviews

Title: Prevalence of cytopenias in both HAART and HAART naïve HIV infected adult patients in Ethiopia: a cross sectional study

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COVER LETTER FOR SUBMISSION OF REVISED MANUSCRIPT

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Prevalence of cytopenias in both HAART and HAART naïve HIV infected adult patients in Ethiopia: a cross sectional study

Tamirat E Fekene

First I would like to pass my deepest gratitude for reviewing the manuscript and your invaluable comments and suggestions.

I am enclosing herewith a revised research manuscript entitled “Prevalence of cytopenias in both HAART and HAART naïve HIV infected adult patients in Ethiopia” for publication in Journal of BMC Hematology for possible evaluation.
A point-by-point description of the changes made in the revised manuscript:

Reviewer number: 1

Reviewer's report:

1- The title should be modified to reflect the study accurately:

Per your suggestion we have changed the title to “prevalence of cytopenias in both HAART and HAART naïve HIV infected adult patients in Ethiopia: a cross sectional study” and its highlighted in yellow.

2- Add normal values for all laboratory parameters:

We added normal laboratory values for hemoglobin, total white blood cell count (WBC), neutrophils, lymphocyte, platelet count and CD4 count. The changes made are highlighted in yellow and located under the ”operational definition” section.

3- Add results of RBC indices: MCV, MCH & MCHC:

I completely agree with this comment; RBC indices are very important to describe the pattern of anemia. However, we have already described the patterns of anemia as normocytic normochromic, macrocytic, normocytic hypochromic and microcytic hypochromic on the bar-graph in figure 1.

4- It is better to transfer all tables and figures to be placed after the text:

Per your suggestion we have placed all the tables and figures after the text.
5-The manuscript is very long. It must be shortened to become readable:

The result and discussion sections constituted more than 60% of the manuscript. Since the study addressed all the three cell lines (hemoglobin, leucocytes and platelets) there were many figures and tables to represent the results. After repositioning the figures and tables after the text the manuscript appears much shorter.

Reviewer number: 2

Reviewer's report:

1) The authors displayed the CBC abnormalities observed in patients with HIV, and they assumed that all these abnormalities are attributed to HIV itself and/or HAART. However these findings can be due to some other disorders, which were not screened in this study. So the authors should discuss this in the discussion part:

The study tried to assess the factors associated with cytopenias; and we evaluated the association between cytopenias and immunologic, clinical and other factors. When these associated factors were considered this was not to mean they are the only factors associated with cytopenias. However, to make these points very clear for the readers we added a paragraph at the end of the discussion.

2) The readers would like to see whether these cytopenias have any impact on the treatment success and long-term outcome or not. The authors should display these results and discuss their findings:

The study aimed to assess the prevalence of cytopenias and the factors associated with these cytopenias. It is true that cytopenias are associated with progression to AIDS, shorter survival times and a predictor of poor prognosis in patients with HIV. We have added a short paragraph at
the end of the discussion to describe this fact. However, to assess the long-term impact of cytopenias in HIV infected patients further studies need to be done.

With Kind Regards,

Tamirat Edie Fekene