Reviewer's report

Title: Cross-sectional study of cytomegalovirus shedding and immunological markers among seropositive children and their mothers: potential implications for viral transmission

Version: 1 Date: 21 July 2014

Reviewer: William Britt

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Manuscript: Cross-sectional study of cytomegalovirus shedding and immunological markers among seropositive children and their mothers: potential implications for viral transmission

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This cross-sectional study of human cytomegalovirus (HCMV) shedding in seropositive children from a population of educated and relatively affluent mothers/infants provides confirmatory findings consistent with what has been published (often decades ago) in a number studies.

Major Issues:

In addition, a major technical issue with this report limits any definitive interpretation of the findings. Finally, the text often overplayed findings in the study. As an example line 205, the results did not approach statistical significance (p=0.06), they were not significant. Likewise, the title is not reflective of the limited definitive data that is in the manuscript. Statements such as line 169 have no place in the results, “Assuming”, results cannot be based on an assumption but data. Perhaps one of the most apparent problems with the data in this manuscript is the insensitivity of the PCR assays (saliva 1.6x10^3; urine 1.6x10^4). Such poorly performing assays make any data derived in this study of limited interest and limits the validity of the conclusions drawn by the authors, i.e. line 194 claims differences in rates of elevated viral loads using 10^6 for saliva and 10^5 for urine without taking into account the 10 fold difference in assay sensitivity.

Overall, this manuscript contains very little if any new information and is riddled with technical issues which drastically decrease any definitive interpretation of the information presented in the manuscript.

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests