Reviewer's report

Title: Involvement of Toscana virus in cases of meningitis in Tunisia

Version: 2 Date: 29 July 2014

Reviewer: Anna Papa

Reviewer's report:

The article "Involvement of TOSV in cases of meningitis in Tunisia" provides many interesting data about the phleboviral infections in Tunisia.

Here are some suggestions for improvement:

Major Compulsory Revisions

The abbreviations have to be spell out when first-mentioned in the abstract and in the text and then use only the abbreviations throughout the abstract and the text. Examples: Toscana virus (TOSV), cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) etc.

Since generic phleboviruses primers were used, and Sicilian-like viruses have been also detected, it seems that the aim of the study was to detect phleboviruses in general and not only TOSV.

Abstract -results: It is better to provide also the numbers and not only the percentages.

Abstract-conclusions: The detection of Sicilian virus is also important and has to be included.

Line 68. Please, specify the new lineage as "Lineage C" which has been detected in Croatia and Greece (Papa et al. Emerg Infect Dis 2014).

Line 72: "short" instead of rapid viremic phase.

Line 94: cells per ? in the CSF.

Line 96. CSF samples instead of CSFs (please, correct it throughout the text).

Line 109? Was it "in-house" ELISA?

Since the cross-reactivity in phleboviruses is high, neutralization assays could be performed for the PCR-negative/ELISA-positive samples.

Lines 197 and 208: do you mean primer sets? (they could be mentioned as phlebovirus-generic and TOSV-specific)

Lines 231-235: It is no need to mention the exact size of each amplicon.

Line 238. Please, delete the word "unfortunately"

Lines 288-291. This has to be written more clearly and mention the exact lineage of the Tunesian TOSV.

Lines 304-313. It is not clear which are results of this study or from previous studies. Are there any sandflies of other species which are active in cold season?
Lines 325-332. The conclusions should be related to the results of the study. Only the last sentence is related. Since this is the most important part of the article, it should summarize in 2-3 sentences what was found, which are the implications to the public health, and measures to be taken.

There are several language mistakes.

Minor Essential Revisions.

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests