Reviewer’s report

Title: Rickettsial infection among military personal deployed in Northern Sri Lanka

Version: 2 Date: 8 August 2014

Reviewer: Marylin Hidalgo

Reviewer’s report:

• Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
  Check the results; we can’t see concordance in the results.
  Example: the authors said 50 patients had serological evidence: 33 FFG, 1 ST, 14 mixed titers. I missing two patients
  Change the second study by second group

• Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
  In the paper the authors don’t describe the presence of inoculation eschar in the soldiers. This is important because about 50% of patients with scrub typhus could be had Additionally some patients in the study reported characteristics associated to this Rickettsia group like (sleeping in field camp, pneumonitis, myocarditis etc.)
  In the discussion topic is mentioned the climatic conditions as important factor but is not related with the situation in SrLanka at the specific time with clinical presentation.
  The author refer to the soldiers know the risk of sleeping in a field, but it’s not clear if they don’t have other option to sleep or ignore the recommendation.
  Check the datas of seroprevalence, because the seroprevalence is only for the first group. The second group don’t apply the seroprevalence because this group is the sick patients.
  The authors should consider review the sentence “We presume that high prevalence could be due to exposure to non-pathogenic rickettsial species mounting a nonspecific cross reaction antibody titers” This opinion should support with datas about the presence in ticks or other serological evidence. The authors doesn’t show this datas or this results in previous studies published
  Is important o mention the results of other microorganism implied as agents of febrile illness, they could explain a lot of things in this study.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests