Reviewer's report

Title: International External Quality Control Assessment for the Serological Diagnosis of Dengue Infections

Version: 2
Date: 21 September 2014
Reviewer: Trang T.H. Nguyen Thi Huyen

Reviewer's report:

In general, this article tried to assess the proficiency of dengue serology. The research question is interesting. Nevertheless, the study is confined and the writing needs some improvement.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. In general, the Abstract section did not convey enough what has been found. In details,
   a. In the “Background” paragraph, the purpose of this study seems not to be clear.
   b. The Methods should describe more about how study was performed and statistical tests used.
   c. The Results should focus more on the main findings, briefly, not only the major result answering the research question but also other important results.

2. In the Methods section, the manuscript did not mention the time when study was conducted.

3. There was a previous EQA on dengue serology performed by ENIVD in 2002. However, it was not mentioned in either the Introduction or the Discussion section. This previous study was only seen in the Conclusion.

Minor Essential Revisions

4. In my opinion, it would be be better to put these sentences in the Discussion section:
   a. Line 224-225, page 10: The sentence "In the other IgM ... lower sensitivity."
   b. Line 255-260, page 11-12: The sentences "Since it was... cost per sample."

5. This manuscript did not mention the keywords.

6. The writing and presentation could be improved. For example:
   There might be typing mistakes:
   a. Line 120, page 6: it should be “manufacturers”, not “manufacturer’s”
b. Line 280, page 12: it should be “laboratories”;
c. Line 193, page 9; Line 211, page 10; Line 253, page 11; Line 347, page 15: it should be “table”

There might be some mistakes in grammar:
d. Line 29, page 2: it should be “but also”.
e. Line 40, page 2: “remain” should be changed to “remained”.
f. Line 58, page 3: “WHO” should be defined in the text at first use. Besides, it should be “According to WHO” or “WHO estimates” but not both of them.
g. Line 98, page 4: “training of laboratory staff” should be changed to “staff training”.
h. Line 99, page 5: “expert” should be changed to “experts”

7. Line 102-103, page 5: What do the “EU” and “FYROM” stand for?

8. Table S1 should be renamed into “Additional file 1” and should be referenced explicitly by file name within the body of the manuscript (Line 117, page 6; line 189, page 9; Line 195, page 9). Table S1 should also have some footnotes about symbol “X” and “-”.

Discretionary Revisions

According to me, some following points could be considered to make manuscript done in a smooth and fluent way.

9. Line 181, Page 9: It might be better to use “Fifty nine” instead of “Fifty-nine”.

10. Line 318-321, Page 14: This sentence contains two clauses, which are connected by the transition word "but”. However, I don't see any opposing relationship between these two clauses. In my opinion, it would be better to separate these two clauses into two sentences.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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.