Reviewer’s report

Title: Multiple-locus variable-number tandem-repeat analysis (MLVA) genotyping of human Brucella isolates in Malaysia

Version: 1 Date: 9 February 2015

Reviewer: Heinrich Neubauer

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Major Compulsory Revisions

The question posed by the authors is well defined. However, the authors state that Malaysia is a non endemic country for (human) brucellosis. They do not provide any data concerning brucellosis prevalence in animal populations nor do they explain how the patients could have been infected then. They clearly demonstrate that Malaysia is endemic for human and animal brucellosis (in small ruminants and pigs) and that there is considerable heterogeneity in Brucella melitensis and suis isolates gained from human patients.

The methods cited in the manuscript are appropriate but a good description of the classical phenotyping methods is missing eg the source of monospecific antibodies. I believe that the work done is good but especially here a clearer description is needed. In contrast to this the description for the molecular typing methods is very detailed and should be shortened considerably. Only variations from the originally described techniques should be explained in more detail.

The data are sound.

The figures appear to be genuine.

The manuscript adheres to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.

The discussion and conclusions are not well balanced and adequately supported by the data when it comes to the point that they should be placed in the epidemiological situation of the country. This is the major shortcoming of this paper. The data are of importance and also interesting but the background of brucellosis in Malaysia has to be considered when discussing the results. I really would propose to rewrite the discussion keeping in mind my advice.

The limitations of the work are not clearly stated.

The authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building. The number of references should be reduced considerably.

The title and abstract convey what has been found. The conclusions are pure.

The manuscript has to be corrected by a native speaker.
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:

No competing interests