Author's response to reviews

Title: Prevalence of methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus colonization in HIV-infected patients in Barcelona, Spain: A cross-sectional study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Philippa Harris,
Executive Editor, BioMed Central

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Thank you for your interest in our article and the opportunity to revise the manuscript. We are now submitting a revised version that takes into account the reviewers’ comments and suggestions. At the end of this letter you will find our point-by-point response to the reviewers’ comments.

The new version addresses all the concerns of each of the reviewers, and we believe that the changes made have improved the paper.

We hope that in its present form you will find our manuscript suitable for publication and look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

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Response to Reviewers’ comments

Reviewer: 1

1) Page 7 line 9: which SCCmec do you mean?
We mean SCCmec type IV and V. Although they are not exclusive to CA-MRSA, CA-MRSA isolates usually carry these types. We have clarified this information in the text.

2) Page 11 line 10-11: you report that one third were S. aureus carriers. However, in the methods section, you report that you only screened for MRSA (using selective agar). If you only screened for MRSA how can the S. aureus (MRSA and MSSA) colonization rate be deduced?
Thank you for the comment. We actually investigated both MRSA and MSSA but we agree that this was not clear in the Methods section. We have now removed any possible confusion.

This is the new paragraph with the changes highlighted in yellow:

“S. aureus colonization was investigated by taking nasal swabs from all 190 patients and pharyngeal swabs from 110 patients. Swabs were plated onto MRSA agar medium (MRSA Select; Bio-Rad Laboratories, Madrid, Spain) and coagulase-mannitol salt agar plates (BBL™ Coagulase Mannitol Agar; BD, Madrid, Spain), and also inoculated into staphylococcal enrichment broth (BBL brain-heart infusion; BD, plus 7% NaCl). After 24 h of incubation at 35-37°C, the broths were subcultured onto MRSA Select and coagulase-mannitol salt plates. All plates were incubated for 48 h and inspected daily for S. aureus–like colonies. S. aureus colonies were identified by latex agglutination (Pastorex
Staph-plus; Bio-Rad Laboratories) and DNase production (DNase Test Agar; Difco, Fco. Soria Melguizo, Madrid, Spain). Antibiotic susceptibility testing, including cefoxitin, was performed by the disc-diffusion method following CLSI recommendations [13]. All MRSA isolates were screened for Panton-Valentine leukocidin (PVL) genes by PCR. Molecular characterization of MRSA isolates was performed by multilocus sequence typing and SCCmec characterization as described previously [14-15]."

Reviewer: 2

The authors have responded well to each of my comments and questions on the initial draft. I have only the following grammatical Minor Essential Revisions:

1. Page 6, line 2. The first sentence is not a sentence. Consider starting with "This is a cross-sectional..."

   Thank you for this kind comment. We have modified the "sentence" following your suggestion.

2. Page 7, line 10. "PLV" should be "PVL"

   Thank you. This was a typo that has now been corrected.

3. Page 8, line 14. "the other patient was pharyngeal carrier" would be better "the other patient was a pharyngeal carrier"

   Thank you again. We have changed this in the text.

4. Page 9, line 3. "only 1 of 3 patients MSSA pharyngeal carrier" would be better "only 1 of 3 patients found to be an MSSA pharyngeal carrier"
Thank you. The sentence as you suggest is clearer. We have changed this in the text.

5. Table 1. Consider changing the title to "Patient Characteristics"
Thank you for this comment. We have changed the title.

6. Table 1. Consider in place of "History of sexual transmitted infection" writing "History of sexually transmitted infection"
This was an error, which has now been corrected. Thank you.

7. Table 2. "mec" should be in italics in "SCCmec"; and in the footnote, SCCmec is an abbreviation for "staphylococcal cassette chromosome mec" and again, "mec" should be colonized.
We have now italicized “mec”. Thank you for pointing this out.

Note: As Reviewer 2 recommended, a native English speaker has reviewed the English language.