Author's response to reviews

Title: HBV immunization and vaccine coverage among hospitalized children in Cameroon, Central African Republic and Senegal: a cross-sectional study.

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Author's response to reviews:

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Dear Editor,

Enclosed please find a new version of the manuscript, “HBV immunization and vaccine coverage among hospitalized children in Cameroon, Central African Republic and Senegal: a cross-sectional study”, which we had previously submitted for publication as an original article in BMC Infectious Diseases (MS: 3076790441660566).

We thank you for re-considering this revised manuscript.
Pleased, find the following point-by-point response to the concerns:

1.) STROBE guidelines: In accordance with BioMed Central editorial policies (http://www.biomedcentral.com/about/editorialpolicies#StandardsofReporting), could you please ensure your manuscript reporting adheres to STROBE guidelines(http://www.strobe-statement.org/) for reporting observational research. This is so your methodology can be fully evaluated and utilised. Can you please include a completed STROBE checklist as an additional file when submitting your revised manuscript.

DONE

2.) Clarification of consent process.

We added the following sentence:

Between April 2009 and May 2010, children aged three month to six years, hospitalized for any reason, with a blood sample prescribed during hospitalization, health conditions allowing an extended blood sample between 2 mL and 5 mL according to the age. Children were consecutively enrolled after their parents or legal guardians received an information notice and oral explanation in the local language and provided a written consent.

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Editor's Comment:

Major amendments

1. Please address Reviewer no. 3’s comment no. 3 regarding a previously published paper (now reference 28)-the authors need to highlight in this manuscript (perhaps in the background) how the paper relates to this one and justify why a separate paper is needed

As recommended, we referred our previous article and explained the different objectives as follows:

We conducted a cross-sectional study in a selected population of hospitalized children in the sub-Saharan African capitals of Cameroon, CAR and Senegal. On the basis of this study, we previously published an article highlighting the low protection rate (58%) in Senegal compared to Cameroon (92%) among children immunized with three injections of anti-HBV vaccine and in possession of an immunization card [18].

Here we reported results on i) HBV immunization coverage using different methods and HBV infection in a selected population of hospitalized children in the capitals of Cameroon, CAR and Senegal, ii) factors associated with having been vaccinated in Senegal and Cameroon in this selected population.

The numbers of the references have also been modified.

2. Check denominator for Table 3 Anti-HBs titre >=10 mIU/ml should this be 176 not 177?
We changed 177 to 176

Minor essential amendments

3. Reviewer 3 comment 13: please add which interactions were tested-NB interactions to test should based on biological plausibility

In the paragraph “statistical analysis”, we added:

“Interactions between the variables found to be associated with “having been vaccinated” in the univariate analysis were tested using likelihood-ratio test”. And, in the results, we added: “There was no evidence for the interactions between the variables associated with having been vaccinated”.

4. line 54 Abstract insert 'The prevalence of' to 'HBV infected children' DONE

5. line 118 clarify 'when needed', we modified when needed by when the child was HBsAg-positive.

6. line 119-20 change 'injection calendar' to 'dates of vaccination' DONE

7. line 122 change 'Partially' to 'Partial' DONE

8. line 212 unclear what '9 were vaccinated out of the EPI' means

We added the following words: outside of the official vaccination programme (EPI)

9. line 217 change 'calendar' to 'schedule' DONE

10. In the limitations it would be good to include the fact that the study was not only restricted to those hospitalised but also to those with a blood sample collected.

We added the following words: This hospitalized-based population from whom a blood sample was collected does not constitute a representative sample and cannot be considered representative of the entire child population.