Reviewer's report

Title: High Prevalence of Bronchiectasis is linked to HTLV-1-associated inflammatory disease

Version: 2
Date: 5 May 2015
Reviewer: Lloyd Einsiedel

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions
In relation to major revision point (i): Although the authors have now included two relevant studies from central Australia in their revised manuscript (Einsiedel et al OFID, 2014; Einsiedel et al PLoS Negl Trop Dis 2014), these have not been integrated into either the introduction or the discussion of this small retrospective study. For example, in the first paragraph of the introduction comment is made of a relationship between uveitis and polymyositis and HTLV-1 'viral load'; however, a stronger association has been reported between bronchiectasis and HTLV-1c proviral load in a central Australian case-control study (Einsiedel et al OFID, 2014). Indeed, median HTLV-1 PVL was more than 100 fold greater among bronchiectasis cases than their matched controls and a correlation was apparent between HTLV-1 PVL and the extent of pulmonary injury.

The authors disregard these published results and appear to attribute the association between HTLV-1 infection and bronchiectasis in central Australia to undefined confounders (Author summary and Introduction 3rd para). This ignores the fact that the only identifiable risk factor for bronchiectasis in this setting was HTLV-1 infection (Einsiedel et al OFID, 2014).

Including a reference to Einsiedel et al OFID, 2014 in the discussion may also remove some of the confusion that is apparent in the Discussion (5th para) where HTLV-1 associated inflammatory disease is more strongly associated with bronchiectasis than HTLV-1 'VL', yet later in the same para the authors claim that inflammation is secondary to a high VL. A reference to the small sample size of the author's study would also be appropriate here and a clear statement of the limitations of this study should be included in a separate para.

Finally, in relation to major revision point (iii), excluding other causes of bronchiectasis is essential to defining the role fo HTLV-1. In the absence of these investigations the authors should be more circumspect in claiming an association between HTLV-1 infection and bronchiectasis.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable
**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'