Reviewer's report

Title: Risk factors of febrile respiratory illness due to viral infections in a semi-closed military environment: a case-control study

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Reviewer: Wen-Chien Ko

Reviewer's report:

This case-control study reveals the risk factors associated with febrile respiratory illness in a military environment. Basically, this study is well-designed and the manuscript is well prepared. The viral etiological agents are detected by a multiplex PCR, and the nature of test, a commercial kit or home-made test, should be clearly indicated. The list of respiratory viruses to be tested should be shown in details. Accordingly, the total list of viral pathogens detected in those with FRI deserves complete presentation in the text. It is interested to know the details of polyviral infections. Furthermore, were there cases of asymptomatic infections as revealed by the PCR technique?

To conclude a protective effect of pdm-A(H1N1) vaccine against rhinovirus should be cautious. The comparison is done among the whole study period, and will be biased by the circulating virus and the administrated flu vaccines in other periods. For example, to assess the role of pre-pdmTIV vaccine, the preferred comparative groups will be those without flu vaccine, but not those with post-pdm TIV or pdm-A(H1N1) vaccine.

The format of cited references needs to be modified, according to the recommended style of the journal.

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:

No competing interests.