Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence and clinical consequences of Hepatitis E in patients who underwent liver transplantation for chronic Hepatitis C in the United States

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Reviewer: Jacques IZOPET

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This study by Koning and colleagues reports on the HEV seroprevalence in patients who underwent liver transplantation for chronic hepatitis C in the US. They found a high anti-HEV IgG prevalence in this population (around 40 %) but no HEV viremia. They also underline the need for close monitoring of HEV infection in these patients particularly in the context of new ribavirin and interferon free anti-HCV therapies.

This topic is important and the design of this study is interesting. The manuscript is well written.

Comments:

1. The high prevalence of anti-HEV IgG antibodies in this US population is surprising. Recent studies from this country (Ditah Hepatology 2014) suggested a seroprevalence of 6 % based on testing 2009-2010 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey sera. Could this difference be linked to difference in the limit of detection of serologic assays?

2. The lack of control group in the same age class (immunocompetent individuals) and the absence of data on food habits are limitations of this study.

3. Several factors explaining the high incidence of HEV infection in this liver transplant population are discussed. Another possibility could be the systematic monitoring for HEV markers as previously performed by others (Abravanel J Infect Dis 2014).

4. HEV seroprevalence of 22 % has been reported in US blood donors but the prevalence of HEV viremia in donors is unknown (none in 1939 donors as reported by Xu Transfusion 2013).

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

No competing interests.