Author’s response to reviews

Title: High prevalence of multidrug-resistant gram-negative organisms in HIV positive men

Authors:

Claudia Reinheimer (claudia.reinheimer@kgu.de)
Oliver Keppler (keppler@mvi.uni-muenchen.de)
Christoph Stephan (christoph.stephan@kgu.de)
Thomas Wichelhaus (thomasa.wichelhaus@kgu.de)
Imke Friedrichs (imke.friedrichs@kgu.de)
Volkhard Kempf (volkhard.kempf@kgu.de)

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dr. Claudia Reinheimer, M.D.
Institute for Medical Microbiology and Infection Control
University Hospital Frankfurt am Main
Paul Ehrlich Str. 40
D-60596 Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Phone: +49-69-6301-6441
Email: claudia.reinheimer@kgu.de

To:
Prof. Castelnuovo
- Section Editor -
BMC Infectious Diseases
Manuscript resubmission of the revised manuscript:

“High prevalence of multidrug-resistant gram-negative organisms in HIV positive men” (INFD-D-16-01002)

November 18th, 2016

Dear Prof. Castelnuovo,

Please find enclosed our revised manuscript entitled “High prevalence of multidrug-resistant gram-negative organisms in HIV positive men” by Claudia Reinheimer and colleagues to be considered for publication in BMC Infectious Diseases (INFD-D-16-01002).

We thank the editors and referee #1 for their comments providing helpful criticisms which we tried to address in our manuscript (for details, please see our detailed point-by-point-response; changes in the text are marked in red).

Introduction of the suggested modifications resulted in a slight change in total word count (now: 2,435 words), and the inclusion of two new citation (#18 and #20).

We hope that our manuscript is now suitable for publication in BMC Infectious Diseases.

Yours sincerely,

Claudia Reinheimer

1. Rephrase the objective of the study e.g. " this study evaluated rectal transmission of MDRGN in HIV positive men'

Corrected as suggested.

2. Give details of the hygiene plan of the hospital to clarify the inclusion /exclusion criteria. Include characteristics of the study population.
Characteristics of the study population are now given and clearly described by paragraph “patients and specimens”, in the section “Results” and, additionally, in Table 1. Corrected as suggested.

3. State methods used for MDRGN analysis to enable the reader to have a clear understanding of the results.

We appreciate this comment and we kindly refer to our section ”Detection of MDRGN and molecular resistance analysis” where these information are available in detail.

4. Include exact p-values (lines 50)

We appreciate this important comment to improve statistics. We therefore had again a look into the current biostatistics literature and found that p-value calculations has been criticized for low reliability (please see new citation #20). We therefore rephrased this section, please see L141-145.

5. Give details of the parameters for inclusion/ exclusion (line 104) and explain why co-morbidity and previous antibiotic use were not considered.

Please see our answer to question #4 of the former response letter and also find our statement concerning this aspect in L184pp. Done as suggested.

6. Explain how sample size was calculated in this section.

This has diligently been answered by our former response letter. To note, one individual of our HP cohort was admitted in November 2014. We therefore changed it accordingly.

7. Delete lines 116-120 since your focus is on men NOT women

Corrected as suggested.

8. The current format of the tables is very confusing! E.g. Table 1; Prepare a separate table for general characteristics of the study population (provide more details of general characteristics
in the current Table 1) and another table for the distribution of MDRGN in the various disease groups.

Thank you for this important comment. For more detailed characteristics of the study population please see Table 1, and for MDRGN please see Table 2. Done as suggested.

9. Can you give a breakdown of the infectious diseases that were diagnosed? (ref Table 1)

We modified Table 1 and inserted the CDC-stadia of the patients admitted to the department of infectious diseases. Since CDC classification is a proven system to characterize stadium of HIV infection by clinical patterns and CD4+ cell count, this is the most suitable way to characterize the cohort of HIV patients in our setting. Please see L 107-110.

10. Titles of table should be above not below.

Corrected as suggested.

11. Table format still not in line with the guidelines of the journal

Done as suggested: we removed color and shading.

12. Your lengthy limitations seem to overshadow the findings of your study. Need to clarify and emphasize the importance of your findings.

Thank you for this comment, we rephrased this paragraph accordingly, please see L160pp.

13. Include a paragraph on antibody susceptibility testing and bla genes

This also has diligently been answered by our former response letter. We did not observe any carbapenem resistant strains and carbapenemases, respectively, neither in HP nor in HN. Therefore we omitted such information to keep the manuscript short and concise.

Apologies, but unfortunately, we do not know the terminus “antibody susceptibility testing” and we did neither find this terminus in Pubmed.
14. The use of English language needs much improvement. Inappropriate construction of tenses and phrases completely distorts the information throughout the manuscript. Avoid direct translation from your first language.

Linguistic revision was diligently performed by a native speaker.