Reviewer's report

Title: Seroprevalence of Herpes Simplex Virus type-2 (HSV-2) among pregnant women who participated in a national HIV surveillance activity in Haiti

Version: 0 Date: 24 May 2017

Reviewer: Marianne A.B. Van Der Sande

Reviewer's report:

This paper describes a rather straight forward albeit opportunistic HSV-2 seroprevalence study among pregnant women in Haïti, where no such data were available yet. Prevalence was found to be relatively high (over 30%), which implies there could be a need for more efforts to prevent sexual transmission (not just of HSV-2, but for STI in general presumably), and potentially a need to be alert for potentially preventable congenital infections if such infections were found to be prevalent also.

A few modifications are still needed:

- both the first paragraph of the introduction (sentence 1-3 = sentence 4-6) and the second paragraph of the discussion (2x 'Despite the ..') have a duplicate section. Please remove these repeat sentences.

- methods: why were samples which tested 'intermediate' according to the manufacturer's instructions (0.9-1.1) considered negative, and not also assessed by Kalon? Please clarify or modify.

- results: a) do not include CIs in the text, when they are also given in the table. This repetition makes the text more difficult to read. b) please remove p-values from table 1 and text: not informative if 95%CI are given also. c) give not just numbers but also % for samples with index value <1.1 (negative), 1.1-3.5 (intermediate), and above 3.5 (positive).

- the discussion refers to several other surveys: please clarify to what extent diagnostics (and thereby prevalences) were comparable?

- the discussion states twice that the sample of pregnant women tested was not representative. It needs to be explained in what way the sample was not representative, and why the sample was selected as it was. It is not clear if results (could) have been
corrected for any sampling bias: please elaborate and clarify. Also, include information on this aspect of the sampling already in the methods, so the reader is aware before assessing the results.

- the authors state there are no data on prevalence of neonatal herpes. To properly assess the relevance of this rather high seroprevalence, these are essential data. Do the authors believe such neonatal cases are (highly) prevalent also, but not reported? Or not diagnosed? Or is the risk for congenital infection not as high in this community? Is it not possible to trace the children born to this group of pregnant women?

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

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