Reviewer’s report

Title: No MERS-CoV but positive influenza viruses in returning Hajj pilgrims, China, 2013-2015

Version: 1 Date: 26 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Keisuke Yoshihara

Reviewer’s report:

Reviewer’s summary

The author summarized the virus screening result of those people attended the Hajj in Mecca returning to China during 2013-2015. This study was quite unique due to the fact that they included both symptomatic and non-symptomatic people who were randomly selected, which may result in the low virus detection rate with comparison to the previous studies. Even though they did not find any MERS-CoV positive case, they found other major respiratory pathogens such as influenza (A and B), hMPV, RSV etc. Therefore, the current study emphasizes the importance of continuing the virus screening for those travelers returning to the countries since the respiratory viruses in particular impart a huge socioeconomic burden through rapid transmission within the community. Yet, the information regarding the intra-country transmission dynamics of infectious agents is not clearly understood up to date. This study will add the important information of intra-country transmission of respiratory viruses and may have an impact on the decision making by the local government and other countries as well.

Major comments:

1. In the title: I do not think it is particularly necessary to emphasize "No MERS-CoV…” please consider modifying the title.

2. The current manuscript needs to be revised significantly in terms of grammatical mistakes, word choice, expressions etc. throughout the manuscript. Please consider using the language editing system for revising.

Abstract

3. Line 48-49: What "significant differences" are you referring to? In terms of virus detection? Please specify clearly.

4. Line 55: Please consider rephrasing "lack of MERS-CoV" since the word choice "lack" is not appropriate in this context.
5. Line 66: "...respiratory infections are the most common infection transmitted between Hajj pilgrims" Is there any documented evidence for this? If so, please put appropriate references here.

Case Presentation

6. Line 81-82: What is "our institute" referring to? Please specify clearly, and correct elsewhere in the manuscript.

7. Line 95: Please use the term "Mean (with standard deviation)" rather than average, or Median (with IQR) in the case the data is not normally distributed. Did you statistically check the normality of the age distribution?

8. Line 99-100: You stated "samples included lower respiratory tract sputum, washes, and upper respiratory tract oropharyngeal swab specimens" were collected from study enrollees. Which samples were actually used for virus screening? Is it consistent throughout the 3 years study period? This is particularly an issue since the virus detection sensitivity may differ among different types of clinical specimens utilized for respiratory virus screening procedure. Please specify in the sentence.

9. Line 114-115 and 118-119: How did you come up with these two hypotheses? I personally think that simply presenting the results (whether statistically different or no difference) would be enough.

10. What the other demographic characteristics collected from 847 study enrollees? such as sex, ethnicity etc. I guess preparing one table for this would be great, but simply stating in the text is also sufficient if not much demographic data other than age were collected in the study.

11. In the Table, you should add the p-values for both comparison in symptoms and years. That will definitely improve the reader's comprehension of the data.

12. In the Table: Please also consider adding the percentage for each virus in addition to the actual value. For example, the percentage of influenza A among people with fever; 7 / 16 (…%) as well as for other respiratory viruses.

13. In the Table: Please show the MERS-CoV in "Virus detection" column even though no case was found in the current study.

14. In the Table: People with non-fever were not tested for the presence of Metapneumovirus or other RSV etc.? Is it right? If that is the case, you should not put "0" since these were not tested. Instead, you should put "NA (not available)".

15. Line 118: What are these two p-values showing? (p=0.00 and p<0.01). Please modify elsewhere in the manuscript as well.
16. Line 122-123: The sentence "no dual infections were detected" should be moved to elsewhere in the manuscript as I do not think this is the relevant place to state about this information.

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

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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