Reviewer’s report

Title: Deposition of respiratory virus pathogens on frequently touched surfaces at airports

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Reviewer: Julian Wei Tze Tang

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting, useful and timely study - which really demonstrates the need for more and more comprehensive studies of this kind in this era of mass human global traffic with the potential for the transmission/dissemination of infectious agents.

Just a few minor comments - this is clearly a pilot study and the authors are to be congratulated on managing to complete this - with all the logistical and security issues involved with such studies at an airport:

- the authors cover most of the limitations, including the relatively low number of samples, but why did they take so few air-samples?
- as the authors stated, the interpretation of the results is difficult because we don't know how long those viruses have been on those surfaces before the swabs were taken - did they authors consider any viral culture/viability studies? This is becoming the norm for these environmental studies now. If not, any reasons why? The relatively high CT (so low viral load) values?
- some analysis of security camera footage recording-describing and analysing passenger touch frequency of these sampled surfaces would have been useful to identify the risk that such potentially contaminated surfaces pose to passengers - the authors could propose this for future studies.

Finally, I would like the authors to include more details (including the limit of detection - LOD) of their detection PCR assay - including the primer/probe sequences, as the purpose of a paper is to allow other teams to accurately reproduce their assay/study elsewhere.
Also, did the authors attempt to sequence any of the POS virus samples - to further characterise them epidemiologically in a local, national or global context? This would add more depth and weight to the paper - though the CT values are probably too high for this to have been successful, admittedly - but this is typical for environmental samples.

The authors should state these additional limitations in their Discussion if these additional steps were not attempted.

**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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