Reviewer’s report

Title: Contamination by respiratory viruses on outer surface of medical masks used by hospital healthcare workers

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Reviewer: Rudra Channappanavar

Reviewer's report:

In the current manuscript the authors investigate the level of medical mask contamination by respiratory viruses on outer surface of used by hospital. The authors identify viruses that accumulate on the surface of these masks when used for >6hrs in a hospital setting. These results also highlight the risk associated with prolonged use and re-use of medical masks in a hospital setting. While these results are valuable to medical community and to caregivers, the outcomes may depend on the season of a virus infection. Nevertheless, the results presented here advance knowledge of use of masks in a hospital/clinic.

As author's mention in the last paragraph of discussion, this study has several caveats. One major weakness of this study is that this study fails to prove if the viruses on masks were the result of endogenous or exogenous source. It is very important to provide this information, otherwise the conclusions cannot be justified. Additionally, the authors fail to measure virus on the lower surfaces of the masks.

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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I am able to assess the statistics

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

Acceptable

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