Reviewer’s report

Title: Clinical characteristics of acute Q fever patients in South Korea and time from symptom onset to serologic diagnosis

Version: 0 Date: 24 May 2019

Reviewer: Mostafavi Ehsan

Reviewer's report:

The data from this study is related to a retrospective study. Sample size is low and a kind of bias can be seen in taken samples (eg, more than 95% of the samples were male).

In the analysis of samples, definitive and probable cases were entered together as cases of acute Q fever. However, it is recommended to analyze the data and examine its relationship with epidemiological and clinical data once only for definitive patients and once with added probable cases.

The hospital seems to have had a significant delay in the patient's laboratory examination, so that only about 50% of the samples of the patients in the first two weeks of the onset of the symptoms refereed to the laboratory for testing and it resulted to this fact that the median time between the illness onset and the laboratory diagnosis are three weeks. For the second samples, it is recommended to take it 3 to 4 weeks after the first sample, but according to the data provided, this time is also much longer (median more than 30 days). In fact, the data of this paper is affected due to hospital latency in sample referrals for the lab, and it is not more related to the ineffectiveness of serologic tests in early identification of patients, as it was discussed.

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

No

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:

Acceptable

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