Reviewer's report

Title: Clostridium difficile Stool Shedding in Infants Hospitalized in Two Neonatal Intensive Care Units is Lower Than Previous Point Prevalence Estimates Using Molecular Diagnostic Methods

Version: 0 Date: 24 Oct 2017

Reviewer: Rangaraj Selvarangan

Reviewer's report:

Major comments:

The authors describe point prevalence of C.difficile carriage in neonates from two NICU centers over two time periods.

1. The definition of a true positive toxigenic Cdiff carriage will help in classification of the subjects.

2. The cytotoxin assay is not helpful, especially because it is performed on frozen specimens (toxin degradation- 67% sensitivity in this study) and was performed only on select samples. This data can be discarded as it causes confusion.

3. How long were samples stored in -20C before testing. Need to rule out nucleic acid degradation due to extended storage. This could impact PCR detection rate adversely.

4. The 7 GDH antigen positive specimens negative by the tpi target on duplex PCR assay is questionable- need explanation/discussion.

5. The 2 samples with tpi target -duplex PCR will benefit from LAMP assay discrepant analysis.

6. How did the authors exclude duplicate patient enrollment given that no patient identifiers were collected- specify in methods.

7. The hypothesis of high Cdiff carriage in neonates is not well justified.
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 recommend additional statistical review

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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