Author's response to reviews

Title: Type specific Real time PCR for detection of human herpes virus 6 in schizophrenia and bipolar patients: a case control study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor in Chief,

Thanks a lot for considering our article with very important criticisms. May I ask you to find our answer to the following mentioned point:

- A critical limitation of this study is the rare detection of HHV-6A/B in the PBMCs. As HHV-6 was detected in only 3 of the 195 participants (1.5%) the study was not powered to detect any differences between the schizophrenia, bipolar and control groups, even if they did exist. Why did the authors chose PBMCs rather than say plasma, where previous studies have reported better detection of HHV-6 in plasma but very little in PBMCs? The authors must justify this choice.

- The detection of HHV-6 DNA in plasma or serum by PCR has been used as a marker for active infection in blood. However, the absence of HHV-6 DNA in the plasma/serum does not show that there isn’t a low-level persistent infection in the tissues. Then in this research at first we performed PCR on PBMCs and because we did not find any significant difference in DNA detection in PBMCs, we did not perform PCR on plasma samples to find the active infection.

Your consideration greatly appreciated.

I am eagerly looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Jila Yavarian

On behalf of Dr H. Ahmadkhaniha