Reviewer’s report

Title: Evaluation of serum zinc levels in patients with recurrent aphthous stomatitis (RAS)

Version: 0 Date: 09 Mar 2017

Reviewer: Rajesh Lalla

Reviewer’s report:

This is a straight forward study comparing serum zinc levels in RAS patients to that in controls. Although no significant difference was found, the results are nevertheless useful since deficiencies of various dietary components, including Zinc, have been linked to RAS.

The following suggestions are made to improve the manuscript:

1. In the abstract, it is stated that the control group was age and sex-matched. However, the F:M ratio in the control group is 53:19 as compared to 46:29 in the RAS group. Therefore, the claim of being gender-matched should be removed and this should be acknowledged as a limitation of the study in the Discussion.

2. Additional information should be provided on the control group. How was it determined that they were "generally healthy"? Was a full medical history taken? Were they questioned about past history of oral ulceration?

3. As nutritional deficiencies can vary by region, it should be specifically stated in the manuscript which region of which country the RAS patients and controls were recruited from.

4. The citation numbers provided along with several references in the text do not match with the respective reference number in the bibliography. This should be carefully checked for all references and corrected as needed.

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

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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