Reviewer’s report

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

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Reviewer: Sergio Uribe

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OHEA-D-16-00361 Evaluation of serum zinc levels in patients with recurrent aphthous stomatitis (RAS)

This manuscript report the findings of an observational study assessing the hypothesis of relationship between Recurrent aphthous stomatitis (RAS) and serum zinc levels (SZL). There is some anecdotal evidence suggesting a relationship and this research adds the possible confirmation of a lack of association between RAS and SZL.

The findings could be useful, but a more detailed description of the methods is required before considering this study for publication, as major rather than minor modifications are required.

All this modifications should be clearly marked in the text.

METHODS

A description of study design is lacking. This paper seems to be a cross-sectional study.

Give the eligibility criteria for both groups, and the sources and methods of selection of all participants.

Give diagnostic criteria of RAS

Explain how the study size was arrived at

Add the number of examiners

Give the agreement between examiners, intra and inter.

Describe the rationality of each statistical test used. For example: "We divided the zinc concentration in normal/abnormal (detail) and compare with the presence or absence of RAS. We assess the independence of observations with the chi-square test."

RESULTS
The table are not useful. Instead use

Table 1. Baseline measures, comparing demographic data for both groups, with p values

Table 2. Compare the mean of ZSL (with confidence intervals) between the groups.

Table 3. Add a graph comparing the mean ZSL (with confidence intervals) for the sub diagnostic categories.

DISCUSSION

Page 8 line 208. The study design cannot confirm or deny the RAS as trigger factor. A longitudinal study is required for this aim. Delete and discuss the results taking in consideration the limitations of the current design.

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.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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