Reviewer’s report

**Title:** The influence of probiotics on genital high-risk human papilloma virus clearance, associated lesions and quality of cervical smear: A randomized placebo-controlled trial

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 27 May 2019

**Reviewer:** Alessandra Pierangeli

**Reviewer's report:**

In the revised version of the paper with the new title "The influence of probiotics on genital high-risk human papilloma virus clearance, associated lesions and quality of cervical smear: A randomized placebo-controlled trial" the issues raised by the reviewers were addressed but several weaknesses in the study were evidenced from answers.

From both reviewers, one of the most important criticism was that bacterial vaginosis (BV) condition in enrolled women was not reported. It's true that BV has been associated with a higher risk of HPV acquisition and decreased clearance of HPV (ref 5 reporting that association has been added to discussion as requested). However, BV diagnosis is often clinical, not microbiological, so that the association with HPV status is not so straightforward. In fact, the significant decrease in mildly abnormal cytology may be likely due to a reduction in BV condition. It would have been a clinical plus of the study to evaluate probiotics effectiveness on BV. Weakness in the study were also confirmed relating to the small sample size that conferred a low statistical power.

Moreover, the revised/added sentences are not written in good English, e.g. in Discussion the meaning of the added sentence "status of BV and vaginal pH were not evaluated since these may be important variables determine HPV clearance" is not understandable.

**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.

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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