Author’s response to reviews

Title: Evaluation of micro capillary-culture method for the isolation of Leishmania aethiopica parasites from patients with cutaneous lesions in Ethiopia

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Point by point response for reviewers

The authors would like to appreciate the comments given by the reviewers. The comments are highlighted in yellow color in the text body of the manuscript.

Materials and methods

Reviewer #1:

General comments:

Author’s response: The comments are well accepted and corrected as it is recommended.

Specific comments;

Materials and Methods

Study population

The study population is not given. The authors have considered the selection criteria as the study population; please revise this.
Author’s response: The comments are well accepted and study population is included (highlighted in yellow) the materials and methods section.

Sample size calculation

The sample size calculation is unclear; please provide details taking into account the objective of the study.

Author’s response: Dear reviewer comment well accepted and included the detail sample size calculation as recommended.

Data Processing and Statistical Analysis: This section needs to be rewritten and the objectives need to be clearly stated.

Author’s response: Dear reviewer the comment is well taken and the data processing and statistical analysis rewritten based on the stated objective.

Results

The results should be presented in a way that the objectives (evaluation of the MCM) should clearly appear. Also, the comparison of the cost was done only between MCM and TCM but the authors are also discussing about PCR and microscopy without core data.

Author’s response: Dear reviewer the comments are valid and duly accepted.

There are no indications of the stars of the Table 1.

Author’s response: Dear reviewer comment well accepted and corrected as recommended.

In table 2, the sensitivity, the specificity, the Positive Predictive values, the Negative Predictive Values are presented, but not the results of the Gold standard.

Author’s response: Dear reviewers in this study we have used consensus standard criteria (positive tests by two of the three tests used) according to the previous study reported by Boggild et al., 2008.

The results of the table 3 are surprising. With the value of $P < 0.001$ for the comparison of the time to positivity in days per lesion analysis, it is a surprise that comparison of the time to positivity in days per patient comparison is not significant. And even if it is that case, you would have put the $P$ value.
Author’s response: Dear reviewer comment well accepted and corrected as recommended.

In table 4 you would have been clearer, by giving the total cost per each test for better comparison.

Author’s response: Dear reviewer we are limited to compare only the two culture methods since the cost of smear microscopy is known from several studies.

Discussion

Delete "apparently" since you have performed the study by yourself

Author’s response: Dear reviewer comment well accepted and corrected as recommended.

Conclusion

The conclusion is straightforward, don't say in Conclusion.

Author’s response: Dear reviewer comment well accepted and corrected as recommended.

Reviewer #2: The composite reference standard must be microscopy and TCM alone. The MCM should be calculated against this.

Author’s response: Dear reviewer, thank you for your comments. Sample size for this study was determined as previously reported by Boggild et al., 2008. Based on this we defined our consensus standard as a lesion to be due to Leishmania when any two of three tests (MCM, TCM and smear microscopy) were positive. These tests served as the consensus or "gold" standard against which each individual diagnostic test was compared.