

Reviewer's report

Title: Detection of 65kD heat shock protein in cerebrospinal fluid of tuberculous meningitis patients.

Version: 1 **Date:** 21 July 2006

Reviewer: Vishnampet venkataraman Radhakrishnan

Reviewer's report:

General

Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?:

It is one of the methods described earlier in the literature

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?:

In the methodology, the authors could have initially conducted a standardization of the assay with different concentrations of 65 Kd antigen and titrated with its monoclonal antibody. They could have found out the lowest detection limit for the measurement of antigen. A standard linear graph can be obtained by plotting the absorbance with the decreasing concentration of the antigen during the standardization procedure. This will lend a support to the validity of the data as well as could have increased the sensitivity of the assay particularly in those 62 culture negative patients with TBM

3. Are the data sound and well controlled? appears satisfactory

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?: appears so

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

The authors should substantiate to the following specific comments (a) Is there any variation in the antigen concentration due to storage of samples, repeated freezing and thawing (b) the authors may give a specific answer to this question: if this assay yields a negative result in a culture negative patient as they found in their 16/80 patients TBM, will they advise the clinician to stop or discontinue the ATT treatment in such patients (c) is there any data in this study which will highlight the decrease in the antigen titre during treatment or in other words whether the assay can yield false negative results in a patient with partially TBM (d) have they compared the assay with any other mycobacterial antigen such as LAM or 38 Kd antigen (e) is this assay can replace the bacteriological method and can it be used as a routine test

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? appears satisfactory

7. Is the writing acceptable; Yes

the authors may be asked to include one western blot picture showing the reaction site for 65 KD antigen in TBM patients and its absence in control groups. this picture is very essential to support their data.

Final comment: The article may be considered after the authors make modification to the above remarks.