Reviewer's report

Title: Herpes Simplex Virus Infections among Rural Residents in Eastern China

Version: 7 Date: 25 August 2010

Reviewer: Adrian Mindel

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Major Concerns
I have some concerns about the test.
The authors used a well-recognised commercial assay. This assay has good specificity and sensitivity for HSV2, although some authorities have questioned the cut-off point, which the manufactures set at 1.10. This appears to have a high rate of false positive results (1-3) and some authorities have used a higher cut off of 3.5 to overcome this problem. Results in the equivocal range can be resolved using Western blot(1).
The Focus technologies HSV 1 assay has a much poorer sensitivity and specificity and some authorities have used a different algorithm to resolve this problem (1, 4). Some comment or justification of the laboratory methods is required.

Minor Concerns
The paper has a number of factual and other inaccuracies
1. In the introduction the authors imply that it is only in females that HSV-1 is a cause of genital herpes this is untrue
2. In the introduction the authors suggest that only HSV 1 disease is defining illness for HIV again this is untrue. Intractable HSV infection of either viral type is defining infection
3. The the introduction the authors suggest that neonatal herpes is caused only by HSV 2 again this untrue and up to 50% of Neonatal infection are caused by HSV-1.


**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests