

Reviewer's report

Title: Genital and cutaneous human papillomavirus (HPV) types in relation to conjunctival squamous cell neoplasia: a case-control study in Uganda

Version: 1 **Date:** 7 July 2008

Reviewer: Franco M Buonaguro

Reviewer's report:

This is a well written review on an interesting subject. The new information is also valuable although it comes from a small number of cases and controls and, most importantly, the case group mainly includes precancerous lesions.

I have however Major Criticisms in respect to the way the new data are shown:

Table 1-3 are a very unusual way to present findings from a case-control study and I strongly encourage the authors to go back to more standard tables. One table needs to show the distribution of cases and controls by age and sex. HIV status, genital HPV and cutaneous HPV must also be shown and the comparison must include ORs adjusted, if at all possible, by age and sex. Mantel Haenszel may do, if data are too sparse for logistic regression. Furthermore, I would also show two sub-analyses: 1) cutaneous and genital separatedly among HIV-positive and HIV-negative cases and controls (like in current Table 3 but with the addition of ORs): and 2) by degree of lesion severity versus all controls. Invasive cases are too few but, perhaps, authors may look into CIN1+2 and CIN3+Invasive cancers.

Tables 4-5: a column should indicate not only which types of HPVs have been found but also which types would have been detectable, according to the testing method used.

Table 6: the comparison of the 3 studies available on cutaneous HPV is impressive but, again, some attention must be paid to adjustment models, if used in the original publications. In addition, in Tornesello et al the OR is infinity but the lower boundary of the 95% confidence interval can be computed.

The text must, of course, be modified according to the requested table changes.

Minor issues

Pag 5, 2nd paragraph: delete, please, the mention of differences in HPV prevalence by sex and age. Conversely, I find the difference in cutaneous HPV prevalence by invasiveness of lesion (Discussion, page 7, line 8) a greater source of concern.

Table 5, at the bottom: align "number" and "HPV types" of de Koning.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.