

Author's response to reviews

Title: Impact of infection with human immunodeficiency virus-1 (HIV) on the risk of cancer among children in Malawi - preliminary findings.

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Author's response to reviews: see over

Editor-in-Chief
Infectious Agents and Cancer

08th December 2009

Dear Editor,

RE: [6781442562996912]. "Impact of infection with human immunodeficiency virus-1 (HIV) on the risk of cancer among children in Malawi - preliminary findings" by Nora Mutalima et al.

With reference to the manuscript mentioned above, we attach a modified version for your consideration. Comments raised by the reviewers are addressed below:

Reviewer Andrew Grulich

1. The definitions of the methods of diagnosis shown in Table 1 have been clarified in the methods section of the paper.
2. The term "documented diagnosis" in line 2 of the results section is means diagnoses that are unknown. This has been clarified in the text.
3. The statement in the methods statement of the abstract saying "Only children with confirmed cancer" was misleading and has been modified.
4. The definition of "small round blue cell tumour" in the methods section has been included.
5. A section has been included in the discussion referring to the association between leiomyosarcoma and HIV, and possible diagnostic confusion.
6. Page 6, para 1: The line about Burkitt lymphoma beginning with "In contrast" has been modified.
7. Page 7, line 1: We have clarified this section in the text and acknowledge that we cannot completely exclude the possibility of misdiagnosis for those without laboratory confirmation.

Reviewer James Goedert

We thank the reviewer for raising this important point. We have reanalysed the data restricting to those cancers with a laboratory confirmation of diagnosis, as they suggest (the numbers are in Table 1). The findings did not materially change and we have included the key odds ratios as a footnote to Table 2 – the odds ratios change little, although obviously, the confidence limits are wider. The proportion of patients in this study diagnosed on clinical grounds alone is very much in line with other studies from Africa and so we are reluctant to exclude them completely.

The revised manuscript conforms to the journal style, and files have been correctly formatted. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Yours sincerely



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