OPEN PEER REVIEW

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As a new feature for progressing towards transparency, we decided to open a new window for all of our editors as well as authors titled "**Open Peer Review**". We hope by this new facility, our reviewers will be more motivated and authors will be more satisfied with the review process. We believe that publishing our peer review reports could make a transparent and clear environment for all our efforts within a journal, but not all reviewers tend to publish their comments.

What is "Open Peer Review" process?

An "Open Peer Review" process is making the details of all review process (including reviewers, associate editors, and EICs comments) as "Public" as it is agreed by EIC, Authors, and reviewers.

Advantages of "Open Peer Review" process

- More transparency, constructiveness and tactful comments of the peer review process: leads to an increase in the quality of reviews
- More motivations for all involved roles in the review process
- Authors' satisfactions from the review process: Increases honesty between authors and reviewers
- Education of both authors and new students
- Prevents reviewers from following their individual agendas and leading to the detection of reviewers' conflicts of interests

You can find out more at:
https://brieflands.com/briefland/knowledgebase/category/tree.html#opr.html

Archives of Pediatric Infectious Diseases
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Peer Review Report for "Non Detection of HIV-1 Proviral DNA in PBMCs of the Neonates Born to Iranian HIV-Infected Mothers in PMTCT Program"

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Review Timeline:

Submit Date:	26 May 2020
Revised Date:	11 Nov 2020
Accepted Date:	24 Nov 2020

Revision (0)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | Revision (0)

28 Jun 2020

Dear AE,
I regret that this article has many problems:
1- Check English writing points:
Abstract: “After viral RNA of plasma and genomic DNA of PBMC specimen’s extraction”
“Early diagnosis of immunodeficiency virus-1 infection in children and access to treatment for this infection is”……..
Introduction: “Also, children (less than 15 years) having received ART globally, from 2000 to 2015, were about 872,500”
“Most of the infections of newborns that were caused at the time of delivery or that were utero viral infections” …….many many mistakes
2- Methods” 20 children who were born to HIV-1 infected mothers which were not included in the PMTCT project were randomly identified”
If they detected these infants, how could they let them not receive PMTCT?
And the grammar is wrong.

3- “About 3 ml was taken from each neonate”
Neonate or 4-6w?
4- Results: please explain when did you begin px and when did you discontinue this (before the test or after?)
What does pvalue mean in table 1?
your method and sampling are confusing. Please draw a flowchart that determines how did you select the infants with PMTCT and without PMTCT(exactly when did you begin the PMTCT and when test them? Did you follow them by test and clinical findings? Compare these two groups with each other.
5- Discussion is not proper. you have repeated the introduction. change it totally.
Thanks.

Shahnaz Armin: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 27 Jul 2020

Dear AE,
As some researchers believe that detecting the presence of HIV-1 proviral DNA is the gold standard for diagnosing this infection in neonates born to HIV-infected mothers (27, 28), the present study was therefore conducted to determine the presence of proviral DNA in PBMC samples of infants born to HIV-infected mothers.
Thanks.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 31 Jul 2020

Dear AE,
There is Good article with an interesting topic that relatively well written, but it is better to consider the following point :
1. If other studies have been done in the same field, please compare their results with the results of the present study.
Thanks.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 1 Aug 2020

Dear AE,
1- The phrase "Determining the effectiveness" is completely inappropriate for the title of the article
2- The main purpose of the study is vaguely stated.
3- This text needs grammatical corrections
4- There is no such thing as “random identification” or “random finding” in research methods. If random sampling is meant, it should be specified with the phrase "random sampling", otherwise another word such as "accidental" or "by chance" should be used.
5- Statistical tests performed for each comparison should be listed separately.
6- Items that have a background or introduction aspect should not be written in the discussion section. In the discussion section, the interpretation of the results and the comparison of the results with other studies as well as the applications of the results are discussed.
Regards

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (0) 1 Aug 2020

Dear EIC,
The manuscript is studied, and there are some comments which should be addressed by the author. According to the comments, the document needs major revision.
Kind regards

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (0) 2 Aug 2020

Dear Author,
The reviewers' comments are mentioned. Please correct the details as mentioned above carefully according to reviewers' request.
Thanks.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Dear Dr. Dr. Sedigheh Rafiei Tabatabaei

I am writing to inform you that, I have submitted a revision of my **manuscript ID:** 105098 entitled "Determining the effectiveness of the PMTCT program by detecting HIV-1 Proviral DNA in PBMCs of the Neonates Born to Iranian HIV-infected Mothers"**.** I have been answering to each of the reviewer comments point-by-point. I hope you accept my response.

Kind regards,
Dr. Farah Bokharaei-Salim

Responses to Comments of reviewers:

Reviewer: 1

1/ Check English writing points:

Abstract: “After viral RNA of plasma and genomic DNA of PBMC specimen’s extraction”
“Early diagnosis of immunodeficiency virus-1 infection in children and access to treatment for this infection is”……..
Introduction: “Also, children (less than 15 years) having received ART globally, from 2000 to 2015, were about 872,500”
“Most of the infections of newborns that were caused at the time of delivery or that were utero viral infections” …….many many mistakes.

Reply: Thank you for your highly detailed consideration, and also thank you for taking the time to review my article and try to improve it. I have done as you proposed. I resubmitted this article for English editing, I hope the problem is resolved.

2/ methods" 20 children whom were born to HIV-1 infected mothers which were not included in the PMTCT project were randomly identified"

If they detected these infants, how could they let them not receiving PMTCT?
And the grammar is wrong.

Reply: These children were randomly identified from an HIV-positive mother several months after birth.

I changed this section (20 children whom were born to HIV-1 infected mothers which were not included in the PMTCT project were randomly identified and this study was also conducted on these children) to:

The present study was also performed on 20 children who were born to HIV-positive mothers and were not included in the PMTCT program due to non-diagnosis of maternal HIV infection.

3/ "about 3 ml was taken from each neonate"

Neonate or 4-6w?

Reply:

I do not understand your question
Blood sampling and testing of babies born to mothers with HIV infection is in the guidelines of Iran in PMTCT project from several years ago.

Of course, now the guideline has been changed and babies born to HIV-positive mothers tested three times.

1- As soon as the baby is born, up to 72 hours.

2- In 4 to 6 weeks.

3- In 4 to 6 months.

4/ results: please explain when did you begin px and when did you discontinue this (before test or after?)

What does pvalue mean in table 1?

Your method and sampling is confusing. Please draw a flowchart that determine how did you select the infants with PMTCT and without PMTCT (exactly when did you begin the PMTCT and when test them? Did you follow them by test and clinical findings? Compare these two groups with each other.

Reply:

A: We tested all the neonates that their mother entered into the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) project for HIV as per the Iranian guidelines (21), the criteria of which were as follows: 1) HIV-infected mothers received antiretroviral drugs; 2) all of them (HIV-infected mothers) had undergone caesarean section; 3) these mothers did not breastfeed their children; and also 4) newborns received Zidovudine syrup (20).

20. Bokharaei-Salim F, Kalantari S, Gholamypour Z, Najafi A, Keyvani H, Esghaei M, et al. Investigation of the effects of a prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission program among Iranian neonates. Archives of virology. 2018.

21. World Health Organization. Global report: UNAIDS report on the global AIDS epidemic. Geneva: World Health Organization. 2016.

B:About the pvalue of the table 1: I have done as you proposed, I added the name of statistical tests in the table.

C: The present study was written to work on infants born to HIV-positive mothers, but we also accidentally found 20 children whose mothers did not enter the PMTCT program, so we also researched on the samples of theses infants, and we included the results in our study.

D: Table 2 compares the infants whose mothers did not enter the PMTCT program and became HIV-infected and those who did not become infected with HIV, which is very valuable. In this table various parameters related to HIV-exposed neonates and their mothers which were not in PMTCT project were written.

E: In my opinion, the comparison between babies whose mothers have entered the PMTCT program and those whose mothers have not entered the PMTC program does not make sense.

5/ discussion is not proper. You have repeated introduction . change it totally.

Reply:

As you proposed I changed the discussion part. As far as I could, I made some changes to the discussion section.

Reviewer: 2

Dear author

1- The phrase "Determining the effectiveness" is completely inappropriate for the title of the article

Reply: As you proposed, I changed the title to:

No Detection of HIV-1 Proviral DNA in PBMCs of the Neonates Born to Iranian HIV-infected Mothers in PMTCT Program

2- The main purpose of the study is vaguely stated.

Reply: Plasma HIV testing is now being performed on neonatal blood samples worldwide. Some doctors believe that the virus should be tested on integrated DNA. For this purpose, we did this project and found that the test results on plasma and peripheral blood mononuclear cells were consistent.

3- This text needs grammatical corrections

Reply: I have done as you proposed. I resubmitted this article for English editing, I hope the problem is resolved.

4- There is no such thing as “random identification” or “random finding” in research methods. If random sampling is meant, it should be specified with the phrase "random sampling", otherwise another word such as "accidental" or "by chance" should be used.

Reply:

I have done as you proposed, and I changed this word.

5- Statistical tests performed for each comparison should be listed separately.

Reply:

I have done as you proposed.

6- Items that have a background or introduction aspect should not be written in the discussion section. In the discussion section, the interpretation of the results and the comparison of the results with other studies as well as the applications of the results are discussed.

Reply:

I have done as you proposed. I have changed some parts and omit some sections.

Reviewer: 3

As some researchers believe that detecting the presence of HIV-1 proviral DNA is the gold standard for diagnosing of this infection in neonates born to HIV-infected mothers (27, 28), the present study was therefore conducted to determine the presence of proviral DNA in PBMC samples of infants born to HIV-infected mothers.

Reply:

You are quite right, this was the main purpose of our study.

Reviewer: 4

Dear colleague

there is Good article with an interesting topic that relatively well written , but it is better to consider the following point :

1. If other studies have been done in the same field, please compare their results with the results of the present study.

Reply: I have done as you proposed in discussion section.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (1) — 23 Oct 2020

Dear AE,
Please the authors explain more about the process of identifying children whom were born to HIV-1 infected mothers which were not included in the PMTCT project
Regards

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (1) — 5 Nov 2020

Dear EIC,
Please the authors correct the dictation and grammar only by a native language.
Please they explain more about the process of identifying children whom were born to HIV-1 infected mothers which were not included in the PMTCT project
Regards

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (1) — 8 Nov 2020

Dear Author,
The reviewers' comments are mentioned. Please correct the details as mentioned above carefully according to reviewers' request.
Thanks.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (2)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Dear Colleague

I am writing to inform you that, I have submitted a revision of my **manuscript ID:** 105098 entitled "Determining the effectiveness of the PMTCT program by detecting HIV-1 Proviral DNA in PBMCs of the Neonates Born to Iranian HIV-infected Mothers"**.** I have been answering to each of the reviewer comments point-by-point. I hope you accept my response.

Kind regards,
Dr. Farah Bokharaei-Salim

Responses to Comments of reviewers:

1/ Please correct the dictation and grammar only by a native language.

Reply: Thank you for your highly detailed consideration, and also thank you for taking the time to review my article and try to improve it.

I sent this article for English editing to Kowsar Publications on 23-5-99. If there is a problem in English, I have to send this article to Kowsar Institute for re-editing.

2/ Please explain more about the process of identifying children whom were born to HIV-1 infected mothers which were not included in the PMTCT project

Reply: I added this part to my manuscript:

It should be noted that during the present study, 20 children whom were born to HIV-1 infected mothers which were not included in the PMTCT project were accidentally found. The mothers of these children were unaware that they were infected with the virus and noticed that they were infected at the time of delivery or several months after the baby was born.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (2)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (2) 19 Nov 2020

Dear EIC
Based on the authors' answers to the reviewers' comments, the reviewer(s) have recommended publication.
Kind regards.

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (2) 24 Nov 2020

Dear Author,
The document is reviewed carefully by the reviewers. According to their comments and your revisions as requested, this manuscript is accepted.
Thanks.