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://sites.kowsarpub.com/kowsar/knowledgebase/category/tree.html#opr.html

Hepatitis Monthly
Article DOI: 10.5812/hepatmon.105078
Published in: Hepatitis Monthly: In Press(In Press); e105078

Peer Review Report for "Characterization of Occult Hepatitis B Virus Infection Among Iranian Patients with Behcet's Disease; Correlation with Clinical Status"

Author(s): Farhad Shahram, Saied Ghorbani, Mahdi Mahmoudi, Maassoumeh Akhlaghi, Zohreh Jadali, Vahideh Imeni, Mehdi Norouzi, Seyedeh Tahereh Faezi, Seyed Hamid Reza Monavari, Shaya Mostafaei, Vahdat Poortahmasebi, Shahram Barfi, Seyed Moayed Alavian, Seyed Mohammad Jazayeri

Review Timeline:

Submit Date: 16 May 2020
Revised Date: 13 Feb 2021
Accepted Date: 13 Feb 2021

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) 18 Jun 2020

Dear AE,

The authors present the result of a cross-sectional study on occult hepatitis B infection in a cohort of Iranian patients with Behcet disease. They try to find the incidence of occult infection in Behcet disease patients and to identify risk factors of the relevance of some biological/clinical characteristics.
Some improvements should be done before being accepted to be published.

-The abstract is presenting the most important results of the study. I would add years the mean age; also I would write the numbers as 39.24 +/- 10.57 (mean and SD) for age, duration; copies instead of copy, also here +/-

-The Introduction is giving information on occult HBV infection and Behcet disease in link

with HBV infection. It is clearly written and with enough information to put the study in the proper framework.

-The material and methods present the patient selection (concrete inclusion criteria), the ethics approval, serology and PCR test, mutation analysis.

-The results presented the incidence of occult HBV infection in 19/220 (8.6%) of those 220 patients included, but the analysis of demographic features, clinical manifestations was performed in only 166 patients (with complete data - 9 occult infection patients missed from the initial group). There were no correlations or differences in occult infection patients and others. One of the main problems here is that there is a comparison between two disproportionate groups (10 vs 166).

-The Discussion presents the analysis of the results of this study in relation to other papers' results. All the abbreviations used should be explained at their first use (see DMARDs), also use the abbreviations in all papers (OBI). Better to use patients with OBI and not OBI-positive...

-In References better to use the short form of the name of the Journals.

-Table 3 should be improved by writing in the legend the explanations for the abbreviations and for the numbers (N, %), instead of the only % as in the present table.

-The use of English language is fair enough and there is no need of an extensive correction.

Based on all elements presented, I consider that the paper could be published after revisions.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 10 Jul 2020

Dear editor,

Manuscript no: 105078
Characterization of Occult Hepatitis B Virus Infection among Iranian Patients with Behcet's disease; Correlation with Clinical status

Comments for authors:
Abstract
1. Occult hepatitis C infection (OCI) is an abbreviation of Occult hepatitis C virus infection (OCI), Please correct it.

2. Please write the mean and SD correctly.
Please write: 39.24±10.57 instead of 39.24 (SD: 10.57)
Please write: 14.13±8.63 years instead of 14.13 years (SD: 8.63).
Please write 475.84 copies/mL without SD you should use median instead of mean for viral

load.

3. Please use the passive sentences and do not use the word we throughout your article

Introduction
4. Please write abbreviation of OBI in the first line of introduction occult hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection (OBI) And use OBI throughout your article.

Materials and Methods
5. Please write complete information about kits you have written (Diapro, Italy) It is not enough.

Discussion
6. Most of your references are old. Please use new articles in your article.
For example, in the case of the HBsAg positivity in Iran, you have used and old article (Ref: 18), which considers Iran to be one of the areas with moderate prevalence in terms of virus infection. In newer articles, Iran is considered to be one of the areas with low prevalence.

You have written:
Iran is considered as being an intermediate area for HBV prevalence; as 2.54% of the population are HBsAg positive (18).

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (0) 26 Jul 2020

Dear EIC,

Manuscript ID 105078 entitled, "Characterization of Occult Hepatitis B Virus Infection among Iranian Patients with Behcet's disease; Correlation with Clinical status" was evaluated by expert referees. Some minor comments are raised by them that should be addressed in a revision of the manuscript by authors before considering the manuscript for publication.

Seyed Moayed Alavian: EIC | **Revision** (0) 26 Jul 2020

Dear Authors,

Please submit a revision based on the reviewers' comments.

Regards,
EIC

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.

Thanks so much for careful revision of the submitted manuscripts by the respected reviewers. All changes have been highlighted in Yellow color.

Reviewer #1

Abstract

Q1: Occult hepatitis C infection (OCI) is an abbreviation of Occult hepatitis C virus infection (OCI) Please correct it.

R: We did not find such a word Hepatitis C occult infection all over the text. It might be a mistake upon changing the files. However, such mistake does not exists anymore, thanks

Q2. Please write the mean and SD correctly.

Please write: 39.24±10.57 instead of 39.24 (SD: 10.57)

Please write: 14.13±8.63 years instead of 14.13 years (SD: 8.63).

Please write 475.84 copies/mL without SD you should use median instead of mean for viral load.

And….

R: Done.

Q3. Please use the passive sentences and do not use the word we throughout your article

R: Except of only one item, all others done.

Introduction

Q4. Please write abbreviation of OBI in the first line of introduction occult hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection (OBI) And use OBI throughout your article.

R: Done.

Materials and Methods

Q5. Please write complete information about kits you have written (Diapro, Italy). It is not enough.

R: We only missed the city in which the company based. In previous line, we pointed out the HBV profile that measured by the kit. This is what every articles mention about the kit. Is there any other points that should be pointed out in this regard?

Discussion

Q6. Most of your references are old. Please use new articles in your article. For example, in the case of the HBsAg positivity in Iran, you have used and old article (Ref: 18), which considers Iran to be one of the areas with moderate prevalence in terms of virus infection. In newer articles, Iran is considered to be one of the areas with low prevalence. You have written: Iran is considered as being an intermediate area for HBV prevalence; as 2.54% of the population are HBsAg positive (18).

R: Done

Reviewer 2:

The authors present the result of a cross-sectional study on occult hepatitis B infection in a cohort of Iranian patients with Behcet disease. They try to find the incidence of occult infection in Behcet disease patients and to identify risk factors of the relevance of some biological/clinical characteristics. Some improvements should be done before being accepted to be published.

Q: The abstract is presenting the most important results of the study. I would add years the mean age; also I would write the numbers as 39.24 +/- 10.57 (mean and SD) for age, duration; copies instead of copy, also here +/-

R: Done.

The Introduction is giving information on occult HBV infection and Behcet disease in link with HBV infection. It is clearly written and with enough information to put the study in the proper framework,

The material and methods present the patient selection (concrete inclusion criteria), the ethics approval, serology and PCR test, mutation analysis.

Q: The results presented the incidence of occult HBV infection in 19/220 (8.6%) of those 220 patients included, but the analysis of demographic features, clinical manifestations was performed in only 166 patients (with complete data - 9 occult infection patients missed from the initial group). There were no correlations or differences in occult infection patients and others. One of the main problems here is that there is a comparison between two disproportionate groups (10 vs 166).

R: We appreciate the above problem. However, during the analyzing data (nearly the end of study) we realized that Rheumatology Research Center did not have enough clinical, pathology tests, HLA typing, and medications history information.

Q: The Discussion presents the analysis of the results of this study in relation to other papers' results. All the abbreviations used should be explained at their first use (see DMARDs), also use the abbreviations in all papers (OBI). Better to use patients with OBI and not OBI-positive...

R: Done.

Q: In References better to use the short form of the name of the Journals.

R: Done. The references have been aligned based on ENDNOTE.

Table 3 should be improved by writing in the legend the explanations for the abbreviations and for the numbers (N, %), instead of the only % as in the present table.

R: Done

The use of English language is fair enough and there is no need of an extensive correction.

Based on all elements presented, I consider that the paper could be published after revisions.

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Revision (1)

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

Seyed Moayed Alavian: EIC | **Revision** (1) 13 Feb 2021

Dear Authors,

I am delighted to inform you that your manuscript is accepted for publication in Hepatitis Monthly.

Regards,
EIC