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
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- 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
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Peer Review Report for "Association of COVID-19 with Hepatic Injury Prevalence and Associated Factors"

Author(s): Hind Ibrahim Fallatah, Waleed S Al Ghamdi, Saad M Al Dosari, Abdullah H Jabbad, Majed Fagih, Hisham O Akbar

Review Timeline:

Submit Date: 14 Nov 2021
Revised Date: 8 Dec 2021
Accepted Date: 9 Dec 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)

23 Nov 2021

Dear associate editor
Thanks for your invitation to review this manuscript entitled “Association of COVID-19 with hepatic injury prevalence and associated factors”. I read it and tried to evaluate it carefully and below you can find my comments:

In general, it is a retrospective study that evaluated 2319 adult patients with COVID-19 regarding the prevalence and associated factors of liver injury. A total of 797 patients (34.4%) have had Hepatocellular liver injury at baseline. Among admitted COVID-19 patients (n=1022), 17.8% have died. Older age and hepatic injury have been associated with mortality. 2.25% of admitted patients had chronic liver disease. (etiology: NFLD [52%] viral hepatitis [34%],…)

1- Methods section of the abstract should be more summarized. A section (except normal range of laboratory variables) from methods in full-text has been completely copied in the methods of abstract section. There is no need for such a complete explanation in the abstract.
2- What would be the difference of running such studies in the Middle East in comparison to

another world region? This has been reported as a reason for performing this project in the background section of full-text.
3- For presenting inclusion criteria, the author can simply say that they included all admitted and non-admitted COVID-19 patients aged > 18 years during the study period.
4- Were there any exclusion criteria? Were there any excluded cases?
5- What were the methods of sampling and calculation of sample size?
6- Was there approval from the ethics committee?
7- In the results section, we see subsections 2 and 3 but we do not see subsection 1!
8- As the authors have mentioned, there are many related and similar studies in the literature. what is the novelty of this study and what does this study add to the literature? what is the suggestion of authors for future related research projects?
9- The discussion section is too long and should be summarized.

In my opinion, the only chance of this project for publication in Hepatitis Monthly journal is reformatting it as a letter to the editor. The novelty regarding this project is not clear and additionally, some other points like sampling issues and approval from the ethics committee should be provided.
Best
Reviewer

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (0) 24 Nov 2021

Dear Editor in Chief
Thanks for assigning me as associate editor to handle the manuscript NO.121160 entitled "Association of COVID-19 with hepatic injury prevalence and associated factors".
I appreciate the authors' work to collect these data and write its manuscript. Unfortunately, this manuscript is not suitable for being published in the HepatMon journal. Instead, I think the authors can change their manuscript format to a brief-report (please read the journal's instructions regarding the brief-report manuscripts carefully).
Also, the authors need to revise their manuscript according to the reviewer's comments.
See the peer-review comments for further information.

Regards
Associate editor

Seyed Moayed Alavian: EIC | **Revision** (0) 24 Nov 2021

Dear Authors,

Thank you for your submission. Please follow the peer-review comments and submit a revision.

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.

Response to Reviewers' Comments:

Reviewer 1:

Dear associate editor

1- Methods section of the abstract should be more summarized. A section (except normal range of laboratory variables) from methods in full-text has been completely copied in the methods of abstract section. There is no need for such a complete explanation in the abstract.

All the abstract was revised and shortened including the methods part of it. It was modified to 200 words abstract to fulfil the suggestions of the associate editor for a brief report article type.

2- What would be the difference of running such studies in the Middle East in comparison to another world region? This has been reported as a reason for performing this project in the background section of full-text.

This was addressed in the discussion section, because of the high prevalence of obesity associated NAFLD and relatively high prevalence of viral hepatitis we expect the COVID-19 infection will cause negative impact on liver functions in large cohort of patients with possible deterioration of patients who had severe chronic liver disease.

3- For presenting inclusion criteria, the author can simply say that they included all admitted and non-admitted COVID-19 patients aged > 18 years during the study period.

Corrected as suggested.

4- Were there any exclusion criteria? Were there any excluded cases?

None as mentioned in the methods section all COVID-19 patients diagnosed in the study center during the study period were included.

5- What were the methods of sampling and calculation of sample size?

This was a cohort study that include all the study cohort.

All patients were included, 797 had hepatic injury. The expected sample size according to the study cohort, and 95% CI will be 330patients.

6- Was there approval from the ethics committee?

Yes and this was mentioned in the methods section

This study was approved by the research ethics committee of the university hospital (Reference No. 491-20).

7- In the results section, we see subsections 2 and 3 but we do not see subsection 1!

This was corrected.

8- As the authors have mentioned, there are many related and similar studies in the literature. what is the novelty of this study and what does this study add to the literature? what is the suggestion of authors for future related research projects?

A statement was added to the discussion section lase paragraph (Future multicenter studies on patients from the middle east with preexisting CLD who had COVID-19 infection will guide the care of those category of patients)

9- The discussion section is too long and should be summarized.

This was modified and shortened to great extent with exclusion of 9 reference to fulfil the associate editor suggestions for brief report article type.

In my opinion, the only chance of this project for publication in Hepatitis Monthly journal is reformatting it as a letter to the editor. The novelty regarding this project is not clear and additionally, some other points like sampling issues and approval from the ethics committee should be provided.

AS mentioned above regarding the sampling issue for the type of the study as a cohort study that included all patients during the study period. Ethical approval was mentioned and the number is given in the methods section.

Associate Editor's Comments:

Associate Editor 1:

Unfortunately, this manuscript is not suitable for being published in the HepatMon journal. Instead, I think the authors can change their manuscript format to a brief-report (please read the journal's instructions regarding the brief-report manuscripts carefully).

The article was revised and modified o a brief report article type.

Also, the authors need to revise their manuscript according to the reviewer's comments. See the peer-review comments for further information.

Done

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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.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (1) 9 Dec 2021

Dear Editor in Chief
Thanks for assigning me as associate editor to handle the revised version of manuscript NO.121160 entitled "Association of COVID-19 with hepatic injury prevalence and associated factors".
I appreciate the authors' work to revise their manuscript. This version of manuscript is suitable for being published in Hepatitis Monthly Journal. I have only one minor comments, which can be considered in the galley proof. The title has two association/associated. It would be better if the authors replace one of them with another synonym.

Regards
Associate Editor

Seyed Moayed Alavian: EIC | **Revision** (1) 9 Dec 2021

Dear Authors,

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

Regards,
EIC