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

Jundishapur Journal of Microbiology
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Peer Review Report for "SARS-CoV-2-Associated CRP, DD, FER, HBA1c, IL6, LDH, PBNP, and PCT Biomarkers and High-Resolution Computed Tomography During the First Three Waves of COVID-19 in Pakistan (2019-2021)"

Author(s): Umar Saeed, Zahra Zahid Piracha, Rizwan Uppal, Rehan Uppal

Review Timeline:

Submit Date: 17 Sep 2021
Revised Date: 14 Dec 2021
Accepted Date: 14 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) — 26 Sep 2021

Dear AE,
The manuscript has only descriptive data without any statistical analysis to indicate a significant relationship and Unfortunately, it does not have enough data and information for publication in this journal.
Thanks.

Shahram Jalilian: Reviewer | Revision (0) — 3 Oct 2021

Dear AE,
Comments for the authors:
1. Mesh rules are not followed. Please check the keywords in Mesh.
This Link: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/mesh
2. In the three waves you have compared, identify the strains of Sars Coronavirus 2 that

have been most predominant in the human population
Thanks.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 1 Nov 2021

Dear AE,
Comments for the authors:
1. The manuscript needs grammatical corrections.
2. Please explain the novelty of the study.
3. What is the association between SARS-Cov2 biomarkers and High Resolution Computed Tomography?
4. In previous studies, is there any association between different waves and biomarkers?
5. The conclusion is not clear, please rewrite it?
Thanks.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (0) 1 Nov 2021

Dear EIC
The reviewer(s) have recommended publication, but also suggest some major revisions to the manuscript. Therefore, I invite the author to respond to the reviewer(s)' comments and revise his manuscript.
Kind regards,

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (0) 3 Nov 2021

Dear Authors,
Thank you for submitting your manuscript to JJM. I have completed the review of your manuscript and a summary is appended below (Pleases find attached files). The reviewers recommend the reconsideration of your paper following major revision. I invite you to resubmit your manuscript after addressing all reviewer comments.
1. Please answer point by point to the reviewer's comments on a separate sheet under WORD format and write your modifications in the revised version (WORD format) in colored or highlighted letters.
2. Your answers to reviewers' queries are not only for the Editorial Board but for the readers and should be included, when appropriate, in the manuscript for improvement and a better understanding. Moreover, add line numbers for text and put suitable line numbers for each response.
3. When resubmitting your manuscript, please carefully consider all issues mentioned in the reviewers' comments, outline every change made a point by point, and provide suitable rebuttals for any comments not addressed.
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https://sites.kowsarpub.com/jjm/knowledgebase/category/tree.html#orcid.html
Regards

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 and Very Respected **2021-12-13**
Editor in Chief, Jundishapur Journal of Microbiology

Re: 119590 (SARS-CoV-2 Associated CRP, DD, FER, HBA1C, IL6, LDH, PBNP and PCT Biomarkers and High Resolution Computed Tomography during First Three Waves (2019-2021) of COVID-19 in Pakistan).

I would like to re-submit the revised manuscript to be considered for publication in '**Jundishapur Journal of Microbiology'**.

Newly added or revised sentences in the manuscript are highlighted with '**Purple**'.

The POINT-BY-POINT responses to the comments provided by reviewers are following:

The POINT-BY-POINT responses to reviewers

Reviewer #1 (Comments for the Author):

Reviewer 1:
Dear author
The manuscript has only descriptive data without any statistical analysis for indicate significant relationship and unfortunately has not enough data and information for publication in this journal.

1. Response to Reviewer 1:

1. Dear and Very Respected Reviewer,
    - Thank you for your valuable suggestions. It is to be stated that the current study is **DOES NOT** represents only descriptive data. **On the other hand the statistical analysis has been conducted based upon an extensive study conducted on 789998 COVID-19 suspected patients.** One of the most frequent ways to represent statistics is by percentage.
    - The data covers the hot viral proliferation time during which Pakistan was hit by three consecutive SARS-CoV-2 attacks during 2019-2021 and sufficiently delivers novelty of data.
    - ***Of note,*** during the third wave of COVID-19 infection, the **CO-RADS score analysis, among patients with abnormal CRP, DD, FER, HBA1C, IL6, LDH, PBNP, PCT biomarkers** revealed 25.082% patients with mild HRCT, 47.8% with moderate HRCT, and 27.07% with severe HRCT status.
    - **Current study is critical not only for physicians across the world but also important for strategic organizations at national level.** It also urges need for further in-depth analysis of the biomarkers associated with SARS-CoV-2.

Reviewer #2 (Comments for the Author):

1. Mesh rules are not followed. Please check the keywords in Mesh.
This Link: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/

1. Response to Reviewer 2:

- Dear and very Respected Reviewer,
  Thank you for your valuable suggestions. The keywords have been revised accordingly.

2. In the three waves you have compared, identify the strains of Sars Coronavirus 2 that have been most predominant in the human population

2. Response to Reviewer 2:

Dear and very Respected Reviewer,

- Thank you for your valuable suggestions. During the first wave of COVID-19 the strain of SARS-CoV-2 were not predominant.
- However during the second wave of SARS-CoV-2 alpha variant B.1.1.7 remained predominant, also revealed by Umair et al., 2021 (https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2021.683378/full).
- And during the third wave of SARS-CoV-2 delta variant B.1.617.2 remained most predominant in the general population.

Reviewer #3 (Comments for the Author):

1. The manuscript needs grammatical corrections.
   Dear and very Respected Reviewer,
   Thank you for your valuable suggestions. The manuscript has been revised accordingly and has also been reviewed by an international language editing service.

2. Please explain about novelty of the study.
   - Herein, we examined the clinical association of biomarkers among COVID-19 infected individuals. The abnormal biomarkers associated with SARS-CoV-2 during first three waves of COVID-19 in Pakistan were analyzed.
   - 789998 suspected cases of SARS-CoV-2 were selected during the study.
   - In comparison to first wave of COVID-19, during second and third waves, the tendency of DD tests were enhanced by 1.7 and 1.88 folds respectively.
   - Similarly, during second and third waves, in contrast to first wave, the IL6 or LDH tests significantly enhanced by 2.85 or 2.44 and 2.78 or 2.5 folds respectively.
   - Of note during the third wave of COVID-19 infection, the CO-RADS score

analysis, among patients with abnormal CRP, DD, FER, HBA1C, IL6, LDH, PBNP, PCT biomarkers revealed 25.082% patients with mild HRCT, 47.8% with moderate HRCT, and 27.07% with severe HRCT status.

3. What is the association between SARS-Cov2 biomarkers and High Resolution Computed Tomography?

- During first wave 2.83% subjects with SARS-CoV-2 CRP, DD, FER, HBA1C, IL6, LDH, PBNP and PCT biomarkers remained positive for High-resolution computed tomography (HRCT).
- During the second wave, 6.03% of the subjects with SARS-CoV-2 infected subjects, CRP, DD, FER, HBA1C, IL6, LDH, PBNP and PCT biomarkers were positive for HRCT
- Of note, during third wave 12.65% of subjects with SARS-CoV-2 positive cases CRP, DD, FER, HBA1C, IL6, LDH, PBNP and PCT biomarkers were positive for HRCT
- Of note, the COVID-19 Reporting and Data System (CO-RADS) score analysis, among patients with abnormal CRP, DD, FER, HBA1C, IL6, LDH, PBNP, PCT biomarkers revealed 25.082% patients with mild HRCT, 47.8% with moderate High-resolution computed tomography (HRCT), and 27.07% with severe HRCT status.

4. In previous studies, is there any association between different waves and biomarkers?

Dear and very Respected Reviewer,
To our knowledge current study is novel and recently no other study has been reported depicting association between waves of COVID-19 and biomarkers in Pakistan

5. The conclusion is not clear, please rewrite it?

Dear and very Respected Reviewer,
Thank you for your valuable suggestions. The manuscript has been revised accordingly

Associate Editor's Comments for the Author:
Associate Editor 1:
According to reviewers comments the manuscript needs major revision.

2. Response to Editor:

Dear and Very Respected Editor,
Yes. Thank you for your esteemed comment. The manuscript has been thoroughly revised according to esteemed reviewer comments.

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: Associate Editor | **Revision** (1) 14 Dec 2021

Dear EIC
The manuscript was completely revised based on reviewers and associated editor comments and it is acceptable for publishing in JJM.
Regards

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (1) 14 Dec 2021

Dear Authors,
I am pleased to inform you that your manuscript has been accepted for publication in the JJM. Your accepted manuscript will now be transferred to our production department. If we need additional information from you during the production process, we will contact you directly. Please remember to always include your manuscript number, whenever inquiring about your manuscript. We will create a proof which you will be asked to check. When you receive the proof, please check all names and affiliations very carefully, as these cannot be corrected once the article is published. Moreover, please add the ORCID number to your and your collages account as soon as possible. For more details https://sites.kowsarpub.com/jjm/knowledgebase/category/tree.html#orcid.html
We appreciate you submitting your manuscript to JJM and hope you will consider us again for future submissions.
Regards