

January 29, 2015



Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: Uruguay WJCID ms revised final).

Title: Improvement in Well-being of HIV-1 Infected Individuals and AIDS Patients Following Administration of the Phytochemical Complex "Phyto V7"

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Name of Journal: *World Journal of Clinical Infectious Diseases*

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The manuscript has been improved according to the suggestions of the editor and reviewers:

Reviewer 1 (00506590):

This is an interesting work in which a phytocomponent mix quickly and effectively improve the weight and makes most of the HIV patients treated to feel better. For these kind of patients is good to be able to help them and this treatment might prepare them for a future more aggressive antiviral therapy. Regard the mechanism it will be interesting to include data with healthy prisoners treated similarly if available. Then if the compound does not show similar improvements it might indicate that the compound does indeed have anti viral activity. Of course following viral titers would have been ideally. I wonder if just another food supplement or higher calory diet has similar improving effects; a literature search might allow to answer this question. This also might help to define better if it is a matter of nutrition versus antiviral effect.

Unfortunately no healthy inmates were treated, only HIV-1 infected individuals, so no data from healthy individuals could be gathered. There was no possibility of taking blood samples and determine viral loads in the prison system. However, from another study, which was conducted in a medical environment with AIDS patients, we did not find any effect on viremia (manuscript in press). This is now mentioned in the following sentences in Page 3, second paragraph, lines 14-16 of the Introduction and in the end of paragraph 3 of the Discussion section, respectively: "We have also found an increase in CD4+ T-cells in HIV-1 infected individuals and AIDS patients taking Phyto V7, without affecting their viral loads titers (manuscript in press)." And "It is not clear from this study if crucial parameters relevant to the progression to AIDS were affected, such as the CD4+ T-cell counts and viremia. However, in a another study (manuscript in press) the administration of PhytoV7 resulted in the upregulation of CD4+ T-cell counts without affecting viral loads, indicating that PhytoV7 has an immuno-stimulating effect and no direct antiviral effect.". Thus, our conclusion is that the effect of the supplementation of PhytoV7 is not an antiviral effect but a dual effect of better nutrition and of immuno-stimulation as discussed in the Discussion section.

Reviewer 2 (00506532):

Well written manuscript, with promising results concerning V7. The abstract has to be written without references and in one sentence Hiv-1 is written as Hi-1, but these are all minor. Concerning the figures with the p values, i am a bit in doubt, since the error bars are overlapping and thus suggest no significant differences, but the additional figures showing the mean weight gain in example are convincing that V7 has a positive effect on the health of Hiv patients, which is in line with earlier publications. So the paper is confirmatory.

The references in the abstract were removed as requested and the typo (Hi-1) was corrected. Regarding the figures, yes, there is overlap between the error bars, but since this is a very large cohort, the differences between groups are statistically significant. Indeed, when showing all the data the differences between the groups are not sufficiently noticeable, but, as indicated by the Reviewer, the additional figures, showing only the mean gain weight or the data of a subset of the individuals studied (those with a more severe condition), demonstrate more clearly the significant effect of treatment and the clear differences between the groups. However, in view of the Reviewers' comment, we decided that instead of showing the weights in Figure 2a showing the delta change in weight between each period; and in Figure 3 instead of the BMI values to show the percent change in the BMI values. This type of analysis demonstrates more clearly the differences over time. In addition, we also added Figure 4c, which shows the increase in the proportions in the Karnofsky score over time, further exemplifying the improvement in the study participants' wellbeing.

We hope that you will now find the manuscript acceptable for publication in the World Journal of Clinical Infectious Diseases.

Thank you and best wishes,

Dr. Gadi Borkow

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