

Reviewer 1:

This is an interesting letter to the editors. The authors reported the findings from their own COVID-19 study, and also analyzed similar findings published by other research groups. Authors asked some questions which are also interesting to readers. I would like to recommend the authors to simply address the mechanism by which SARS-CoV-2 attack the digestive system and results in some GI symptoms. Please refer to *The American Journal of Gastroenterology*. 2020; 115(7):1003-1006. doi: 10.14309/ajg.0000000000000691.

Dear reviewer Hu Zhang,

First of all, thank you for your comments and your note on our manuscript.

We added, succinctly, the requested content and its citation, as this is a letter to the editor about the article by Cao et al entitled “COVID-19 and its effects on the digestive system” and one of the explanations to be debated and expected to be answered by the author are the means and mechanism that the new variants of SARS-CoV-2 use to explain the severity of the gastrointestinal manifestation.

Once again, I appreciate the opportunity to review and hope that this debate can help our academic community.

Academic Editor: Guo-Xun Chen

I included the discussion requested by the reviewer, consulting the literature mentioned by him. As for your request to add the “Article Highlights”, the same is not requested for “Letter to the editor” articles

“Article Highlight” section in the “5 Issues raised”, No. 8.

The “Article Highlight” section is required for basic and clinical research articles (Basic Study, Case Control Study, Clinical and Translational Research, Clinical Trials Study, Observational Study, Prospective Study, Randomized Clinical Trial, Randomized Controlled Trial, Retrospective Cohort Study, Retrospective Study, Evidence-Based Medicine), Meta-Analysis, Systemic Review, and Scientometrics.

It's not required for review articles (Evidence Review, Minireviews, Opinion Review, Review), Case Reports, Academic Activity Report, Diagnostic and Therapeutic Norms, Editorial, Ethics, Expert Consensus, Expert Recommendations, Field of Vision, Frontier, Guideline Interpretation, Guidelines, **Letter to the Editor**, Retraction Note, and

Therapeutic and Diagnostic Guidelines.

We appreciate your time in reviewing our article and look forward to a positive response for publication.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Igor Braga', with a stylized, cursive script.

Igor Braga Ribeiro, MD

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