

Responses to Editor and reviewers' comments

Name of journal: World Journal of Virology

Manuscript NO: 60564

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Title: Epidemiological Characterization and Geographic Distribution of HIV/AIDS infection in North African countries

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Dear Editor,

Thank you for describing our paper as interesting, and indeed it was carried out on a large geographic area where such studies are rare. We believe that the valuable comments of your reviewers have helped us to improve the quality of the paper. Herein, we answer their comments one by one.

Major Correction

Language. As the respected reviewer has raised concern regarding the quality of the English language, we have given the paper to a professional editing office in Belgium, where it was corrected and edited carefully. **An attestation** is attached.

Tables and Figures

All tables and Figures have been carefully corrected, revised and clearly edited.

Reviewer #1

We would like to thank the respected reviewer for appreciating the importance of this study. Indeed, we consider it important because there is a dearth of reliable findings on HIV in North Africa, as the reviewer has stated.

Content specific comments

Q 1- Abstract: "In the Conclusion the authors mention that HIV is an emerging threat in North Africa. Given that the virus emerged 40 years ago in Africa that term does not seem appropriate. I might use the word "increasing" threat to more accurately describe the data presented. This is supported by the Background on the next page where the authors say that Africa has been a severely affected geographical area with over 70% of the world population living with HIV

A 1- We agree with respected reviewer and we have used the word "increasing" as the reviewer suggested to read "This comprehensive review indicates that HIV infection in North African countries is an increasing threat." Page 2, line 48.

Q 2- On the bottom of page 6 there is an English translation problem where the authors say that risky behavior was not well indulged by society. I have no idea what they mean. Please fix!

A 2- We have corrected this to "not well tolerated." Page 4, line 82.

Methods are well devised and described.

Thank you for your positive evaluation of our methodology, which is important for the quality of this review.

Results:

Q3- Page 14 More translation problems that make reading this section difficult.

Under Demographic features, second sentence I think the statement "Within the HIV/AIDS cases reported the better word is *Among the HIV/AIDS cases*. I would re-write this sentence to say: Among the HIV/AIDS cases reported the prevalence of infection was highest among the age 21-30 age group (45%) compared to 31-40 year age group (30%) , 95% CI should be used so the reader can see if this difference is statistically significant

A3- Indeed we agree with respected reviewer and we changed the statement accordingly to read "Among the HIV/AIDS cases reported the prevalence of infection was highest among the age 21-30 age group (45%) compared to 31-40 year age group (30%)"

Q 5- Page 15 and throughout the paper, please define the acronyms. I don't know what PWID stands for and had to guess what the other acronyms meant.

A 5- We apologize for this omission. PWID was meant for "people with injection drug use." We have changed it to injection drug users (IDUs) and defined it on first use. We also ensured that other abbreviations are defined on first use.

Q 6-Five lines down from the Prevalence section the authors say:" HIV/AIDS among sexual promiscuity was..." How is this defined? This is a behavior that needs to be defined not a group!

A 6 We have changed this to promiscuous individuals.

Q7-Page 17: Geospatial distribution, first sentence. The authors state that HIV/AIDS spread gradually from coastal sites to other regions. Figure 7 does not separate 2008 from 2017 so what is the data behind this statement?

A 7 We would like to thank the review for such important note we have changed the statement to Read[HIV/AIDS infections is reported to be high in the capital coastal cities in comparison to the other regions of Northern African countries] Page 10 , Line 226-7

Q 8-Page 18, last line of the first paragraph. The sentence structure is confusing. I think you meant to say: *No data was available on most Eastern and Western Sahara regions*".

A8 Thank you, We have corrected this to "However, no data are available on most of the eastern and western Sahara regions." Page 11 Line 246-7

Q 9-Next sentence, please define what you mean by high-risk clustering.

A 9 Yes you are right we have changed this statement to READ; North African countries have shown spatial variation of HIV/AIDS cases during the ten-year study period. Page 11, Lines 248-9

Q 10- An English speaker needs to look at the syntax for this page because it is awkward.

A 10 We had the manuscript edited by a professional editor.

Q 11- Page 20,second paragraph 5 lines down. "Northeastern Algeria reported as high". High compared to what? And do you mean significantly higher?

A 11 We have removed this statement completely

Q 12-Discussion: What do you mean by HIV infection patterns in North Africa countries was subjected to debate and perturbation? Also 4th line down what do you mean by judgmental. This sentence is so vague.

A 12 We have deleted this sentence as it is not important

Q 13 The rest of the Discussion needs to be edited by and English speaker.

A 13 The whole manuscript has been edited by a professional editor.

EDITORIAL OFFICE'S COMMENTS

Q 1 - The corresponding author has not published articles in the BPG.

A1 - Please check again. We have published two papers as following;

Daw MA, El-Bouzedi AA, Ahmed MO, Dau AA, Agnan MM, Drah AM. Geographic integration of hepatitis C virus: A global threat. World J Virol. 2016 Nov 12;5(4):170-182. doi: 10.5501/wjv.v5.i4.170. PMID: 27878104; PMCID: PMC5105050.

Daw MA, Shabash A, El-Bouzedi A, Dau AA, Habas M; Libyan Study Group of Hepatitis and HIV. Modelling the prevalence of hepatitis C virus amongst blood donors in Libya: An investigation of providing a preventive strategy. World J Virol. 2016 Feb 12;5(1):14-22. doi: 10.5501/wjv.v5.i1.14. PMID: 26870670; PMCID: PMC4735550.

Q 2 I found the language classification was grade C

A2 – We had the manuscript edited by a professional editor.

Q 3 I found the authors did not provide the original figures. Please provide the original figure documents. Please prepare and arrange the figures using PowerPoint to ensure that all graphs or arrows or text portions can be reprocessed by the editor

A 3 – Thank you for this comment we have provided and submitted the original figure documents as [(8) 60564-Image File]- attached

Q4 I found the authors did not add the PMID and DOI in the reference list

A4 - We have added PMID and DOI, except for a few papers not in Pubmed.

Q5 The author should number the references in Arabic numerals according to the citation order in the text. The reference numbers will be superscripted in square brackets at the end of the sentence with the citation content or after the cited author's name, with no spaces.

A5- The reference numbers have been formatted accordingly.

Q 6 Requirements for figures: Please provide decomposable Figures (whose parts are all movable and editable), organize them into a single PowerPoint file, and submit as “60564-Figures.ppt” on the system. The figures should be uploaded to the file destination of “Image File”.

A 6 Thank you for such commnet we indeed organized them into a single PowerPoint file, and submitted as “60564-Figures.ppt” on the system

Q 7 Requirements for tables: Please provide decomposable Tables (whose parts are all movable and editable), organize them into a single Word file, and submit as “60564-Tables.docx” on the system. The tables should be uploaded to the file destination of “Table File”.

A 7 We now provide the tables as a movable and editable, and organized into a single Word file, and submit as “60564-Tables.docx” on the system

Q 8 Step 7: Upload the Revision Files

For all required accompanying documents (listed below), you can begin the uploading process via the F6Publishing system. Then, please download all the uploaded documents to ensure all of them are correct.

A 8 we did indeed and organized as follows

| | |
|---|---------|
| (1) 60564-Answering Reviewers | OK |
| (2) 60564-Audio Core Tip | OK |
| (3) 60564-Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure Form | OK |
| (4) 60564-Copyright License Agreement | OK |
| (5) 60564-Approved Grant Application Form(s) or Funding Agency Copy of any Approval Document(s) | NO NEED |
| (6) 60564-Non-Native Speakers of English Editing Certificate | OK |
| (7) 60564-Video | NO NEED |
| (8) 60564-Image File | OK |
| (9) 60564-Table File | OK |
| (10) 60564-Supplementary Material | NO NEED |

We hope by these important corrections, we will see our paper published in your respected journal

Should you need any further information, please let me know.

Do accept my best regards.

Mohamed