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Title: Gastrointestinal mucosal immunity and COVID-19

Short title: COVID-19 mucosal immunity

Authors: Tsvetelina Velikova, Violeta Snegarova, Aleksander Kukov, Hristiana Batselova, Antoaneta Mihova, Radislav Nakov

Dear Editors,

Dear Reviewers,

Thank you for your time to revise our manuscript. We acknowledge all the comments and suggestions for improving our paper. All changes are highlighted.

Reviewer #1: 05825395

Scientific Quality: Grade B (Very good)

Language Quality: Grade A (Priority publishing)

Conclusion: Minor revision

Specific Comments to Authors: Dear authors, congratulations on this very interesting review. I find your article very well-written. I liked the accessible structure, this work is totally suitable also for colleagues from another areas of expertise like myself (I am a surgeon). The text resembles the competence of the authors and shows their advanced understanding of the topic.

➤ Thank you for the overall high evaluation of our manuscript.

There is one thing that is in my opinion lacking- you did not incorporate any overview of existing vaccines and did not elaborate on their impact on the gut mucosa. Are such publications available yet? If not- I think you should at least mention it. Bring the readers up-to-date with this subject, so they can understand the size of the problem. Then this article will be truly complete.

- We completely agree with the suggestion. However, we have such a paragraph on the existing vaccines and specifically on those for mucosal administration – in the “SARS-COV-2 AND MUCOSAL IMMUNITY OF THE GIT” section on page 9. We believe that discussing on mucosal vaccine options improved our paper significantly.

(1) Science editor: 1 Scientific quality: The manuscript describes a minireview of the gastrointestinal mucosal immunity and COVID-19. The topic is within the scope of the WJG. (1) Classification: Grade B; (2) Summary of the Peer-Review Report: This is a very interesting review. The article is very well-written. The text resembles the competence of the authors and shows their advanced understanding of the topic. The questions raised by the reviewers should be answered;

- Thank you for the overall high evaluation of our manuscript.

(3) Format: There are no tables and no figures;

- Thank you for the note. We have prepared an original figure that covers the mucosal aspects of COVID-19.

(4) References: A total of 83 references are cited, including 76 references published in the last 3 years; (5) Self-cited references: There are 3 self-cited references. The self-referencing rates should be less than 10%. Please keep the reasonable self-citations (i.e. those that are most closely related to the topic of the manuscript) and remove all other improper self-citations. If the authors fail to address the critical issue of self-citation, the editing process of this manuscript will be terminated;

- Dear editor, we agree that the self-citations should be avoided. Here, we have four auto citations (we have added one regarding the vaccines, as the reviewer suggested) from a total of 82, which is 0.48% and below the 10%. We believe that this is important to emphasize our competence in the field.

and (6) References recommendations: The authors have the right to refuse to cite improper references recommended by the peer reviewer(s), especially references published by the peer reviewer(s) him/herself (themselves). If the authors find the peer reviewer(s) request for the

authors to cite improper references published by him/herself (themselves), please send the peer reviewer's ID number to editorialoffice@wjgnet.com. The Editorial Office will close and remove the peer reviewer from the F6Publishing system immediately.

➤ No such malpractice found.

2 Language evaluation: Classification: Grade A. 3 Academic norms and rules: No academic misconduct was found in the Bing search. 4 Supplementary comments: This is an invited manuscript. No financial support was obtained for the study. The topic has not previously been published in the WJG. 5 Issues raised: (1) PMID numbers are missing in the reference list. Please provide the PubMed numbers and DOI citation numbers to the reference list and list all authors of the references.

➤ We have revised the reference details and added the missing information.

Please revise throughout; and

(2) Please add table/figure to this review.

➤ Thank you for the note. We have prepared an original figure that covers the mucosal aspects of COVID-19.

6 Recommendation: Conditional acceptance.

(2) Editorial office director:

(3) Company editor-in-chief: I have reviewed the Peer-Review Report, the full text of the manuscript, and the relevant ethics documents, all of which have met the basic publishing requirements of the World Journal of Gastroenterology, and the manuscript is conditionally accepted. I have sent the manuscript to the author(s) for its revision according to the Peer-Review Report, Editorial Office's comments and the Criteria for Manuscript Revision by Authors. Before final acceptance, the author(s) must add a table/figure to the manuscript.

➤ Thank you for the overall high evaluation of our paper. All of the issues raised were addressed. We have prepared an original figure that covers the mucosal aspects of COVID-19.