

Dear Editor-in-Chief

We would like to thank you and the reviewers for taking out precious time to review the manuscript and suggesting excellent recommendations. The implementation of these recommendations has markedly enhanced the quality of the manuscript tremendously.

We have revised the manuscript as per the suggestions of the esteemed reviewers. However, if there are some shortcomings or there are any further new suggestions, kindly do let us know. We would be extremely glad to carry out the changes.

The changes have been highlighted in yellow colour in the revised manuscript and have been included here as well in the response to the questions.

Thanking you once again

Pankaj Garg

Corresponding Author, on behalf of all authors

Reviewer's comments

Thank you for your manuscript about diagnosis for anal fistula due to tuberculosis infection. I understand the importance for early diagnosis and treatment for tuberculosis infected anal fistula. I understand PCR is useful for diagnosis of TB in fistula-in-ano rather than Gene Xpert, histopathology. Especially, PCR for pus is most sensitive. Anal fistula of tuberculosis (TB) tends to be complex and non-healing fistula. Your manuscript is very impressive.

Ans: We are extremely grateful to the esteemed Reviewer for the compliment and so encouraging comments.

I have some comment. First of all, manuscript title is adequate for "Diagnosis of Perianal tuberculosis by polymerase In the method, you do not make it clear that the patients were treated in your hospital, your hospital group, or other institution. You need mention.

Ans: Thanks for the suggestion. It has been added in the Methods section (page-4).

The patients were operated at Indus International hospital (affiliation no 1) while the preoperative work-up, postoperative follow-up and the data analysis was done at Garg Fistula Research Institute (affiliation no 2).

I think the rate of tuberculosis (TB) positive case diagnosed under PCR is higher than other previous study. And PCR positive rate is extremely higher than histopathology. It seems different from other study. Do you think about this?

Ans: We thank the Reviewer for raising this point. The addition of this data has added to the quality of the manuscript. It has been added in the Discussion section (Page-11,12).

The rate of TB positive cases diagnosed with PCR is higher in the present study as compared to a previous study^[5]. However, the difference is not statically significant. In the present study, 12.4% (129/1034) of PCR (pus plus tissue) samples tested positive for TB whereas in the previous study^[5], 10.3% (47/456) of PCR (pus plus tissue) samples tested positive for TB ($p=0.25$, not significant, Fisher's exact test). The detection rate of TB with HPE was also similar in the present study (1.5%- 3/197) and the previous study (1.1%-2/181)^[5] ($p=1.0$, not significant, Fisher's exact test). So, the increase in TB detection rate by PCR and HPE is not significant and seems to be a random variation.

Science editor:

5 Issues raised:

(1) The authors did not provide original pictures. 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;

Ans: Figures prepared and arranged in PowerPoint

(2) PMID and DOI 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. Please revise throughout;

Ans: The references have been revised accordingly

(3) The "Article Highlights" section is missing. Please add the "Article Highlights" section at the end of the main text;

Ans: The "Article Highlights" section has been added at the end of the main text

(4) Authors should always cite references that are relevant to their study. Please check and remove any references that not relevant to this study;

Ans: The references not relevant to this study have been deleted.

(5) Please provide the written informed consent.

Ans: A copy of original patient's written informed consent has been uploaded