



**SDI Review Form 1.5**

**PART A:**

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|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Journal Name:            | <a href="#">International Journal of TROPICAL DISEASE &amp; Health</a>                          |
| Manuscript Number:       | <b>MS: 2012/IJTDH/1904</b>                                                                      |
| Title of the Manuscript: | <b>Risk factors associated with two viperid snake bites in Sri Lanka: a case control study.</b> |

*(Note: Title of different sections as proposed below may differ in case of review paper)*



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### **PART B: Review Comments**

|                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Reviewer's comment</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Author's comment</b> (if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part and write here 'Corrected'/ if not agreed, give suitable justifications)                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| <b>General comment:</b>                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>The risk factors detected in the study are all well established facts.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Even though the epidemiological and risk factors related to snake bites have been described previously, those had not been proven using case control studies in the local setting.                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Specific comments:</b>                                                                                                                                                                    | 56 cases are too small to comment on the risk factors in a country like Sri Lanka where snake bite is a major public health problem.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Title and abstract</b>                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>The title would be better if it specifies a particular region / place in Sri Lanka as the number of cases is only 56.</p> <p>In the abstract –line 14,15 - “not using protective footwear has been stated to be a significant risk factor whereas in the result -line 97- it has been mentioned as not a significant risk factor. The two statements are self contradictory.</p> <p>In keywords line 25 – Russell's viper - “viper” spelling to be corrected.</p>                                                                             | <p>Corrected – changed the topic as “Risk factors associated with bites due to two viperid snakes: a case control study.”</p> <p>Corrected – Inclusion of “not using protective foot wear” as a significant risk factor is a mistake and the line 97 is correct. (As the confidence interval implies it is not a significant risk factor)</p> <p>Corrected</p> |
| <b>Introduction</b> (Is the problem/objective of this study original, important and well defined?)                                                                                           | The objectives are well defined and important.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Are all the references cited relevant, adequate? Are there any other suitable current references authors need to cite?                                                                       | The references cited are adequate and relevant.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Materials &amp; methods</b> (Kindly comment on the suitability of the methods. Sufficient details of the methods should be provided to allow peers to evaluate and/or replicate the work) | <p>In the present study cases were prospectively selected from consecutive admissions with viper bites presenting with dead snakes. It is not clear whether these 56 cases of viper bite which presented consecutively all came with dead snakes or in between there were viper bite cases that did not present with dead snakes and were omitted from the study.</p> <p>Nothing has been mentioned regarding the period of the study during which the 56 cases were recruited. It would reflect the magnitude of the problem in the region.</p> | <p>Cases were recruited prospectively from patients with RV and HNV bites presented with offending snake. Patients who presented without the snake were not included in the study as the snake authentication could not be made.</p> <p>Corrected</p> <p>The two references provide the base for</p>                                                           |



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|  | It is better to avoid references in the Methods section.- Line 67. | the selection of risk factors in this study hence those were included in methodology |
|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



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| <p><b>Results &amp; discussion</b> (Kindly comment on: 1. Are the data well controlled and robust? 2. Authors should provide relevant references during discussion. 3. Discussion and conclusions should be based on actual facts and figures. Biased claims should be pointed out. 4. Are statistical analyses must for this paper? If yes, have sufficient and appropriate statistical analyses been carried out?)</p> | <p>Line 63, 64. The authors state that the controls were age and gender matched from the same environment, socio economic and cultural status. On the other hand in the table in the risk factor – “being in outdoor places” and “working in an outdoor field” – in both these groups only 10 subjects (9%) were controls compared to 52 and 54 cases respectively. Only 10 controls is too less for proper study where the total number of controls is double that of the cases.<br/>The authors need to clarify how inspite of proper matching of controls in relation to the factors mentioned the number of controls in these two groups is so less.</p> <p>Line 87 – “62% of the bites had occurred during 2.00 PM to 10.00 PM. On the other hand in the discussion –line 115,116 – “majority of the bites were reported at dusk and at early hours of night”. 2.00PM or a couple of hours after it cannot be accepted as dusk. It would be better if the authors break up the time into 6 hours intervals or in a convenient way to support the findings.</p> <p>In Result section – line 88-97 – “13 risk factors were assessed and 8 showed significant association”. However from line 90-97 only 7 risk factors have been mentioned.</p> <p>Line 94-95 – “Low level financial status” the “OR 95%” has been repeated twice.</p> <p>Line 106-108 – “Similar observations has been reported in previous studies in Sri Lanka and in some other South Asian countries” Among the references of other South Asian countries only one reference is present and not of multiple countries.</p> | <p>The age and gender matched control group was selected from relatives and neighbourhood of cases who had no history of snake bites during their lifetime. Control selection was done by matching these criteria. Further the factors which were assessed later on were not considered in control selection as it creates a selection bias. Varied nature of the activity involvements and occupations in the considered population might have led to a lower number of controls in the given two analytical sub categories.</p> <p>Corrected: Line 116 was corrected as “... reported in the evening and early hours of night...”, which matches the given time period.</p> <p>Corrected: Line 88 “13 risk factors were assessed and 7 showed significant association”</p> <p>Corrected</p> <p>Corrected: New reference added</p> |
| <p>Are there any ethical or competing interest issues?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>No</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>-</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><b>Conclusion</b> (Is the conclusion supported by the data, discussed inside the manuscript? Conclusions should not be biased and should be based on the data, presented</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>The conclusions are well supported by the data.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>-</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |



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| inside the manuscript only) |                                                                                |                                |
| References                  | References for South Asian countries as previously mentioned need to be added. | Corrected: New reference added |