

Review of: "Clinical and Subclinical Bovine Mastitis: *Staphylococcus aureus* Isolation and Identification from Dairy Farms Located in and Around Hawassa Town, Southern Ethiopia"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This manuscript presents data on the proportion of clinical and subclinical mastitis, as well as the isolation of *Staphylococcus aureus* from each of these conditions, and the evaluation of certain risk factors associated with mastitis in and around Hawassa town in southern Ethiopia. The results show a dominance of subclinical mastitis over clinical mastitis, a substantial presence of *S. aureus* in both clinical and subclinical mastitis cases, and an association of age, lactation stage, and breed with the existence of the disease. The manuscript could benefit from addressing the following issues:

1. It is stated that animals were randomly selected, but how and what kind of randomization was done is not described. The study design just describes the location from where the samples were collected and the time window during which sampling was done.
2. The introduction is too descriptive and contains information that is either not related to the focus of the paper or not required. For example, of what relevance is the fourth paragraph, as well as the last four sentences of the eighth paragraph?
3. The rationale for the work, which is stated in the last paragraph of the introduction, that it is necessary to update information to examine whether there is any change in the epidemiology of the bacteria, is on a very weak foundation. Without examining the proportion of at the least the major bacteria and focusing only on *S. aureus*, does not provide any inference on the change in epidemiology. Even with *S. aureus*, some sort of typing would throw light on the change in epidemiology. Ultimately, many of the findings of this paper agreed with previous findings, with a few contradictions. How this contributes further to epidemiology is unclear.
4. The human and animal populations should be stated as per certain census or as of a particular date.
5. Simple statistics could be applied for Tables 1 and 2, although the no. of cows as well as the no. of isolates obtained with clinical mastitis is too few (Table 2). It is also not clear how many of the samples came from the same cows.
6. For hygiene as a risk factor, only the frequency of cleaning was taken into consideration. Was any effort made to classify the hygienic practices into different grades? How are these being normalized against each other? How would this influence the results?
7. An important risk factor is the lactation yield, which has been ignored in this study.

8. There is a lot of repetition between introduction and discussion, between results and tables, and between results and discussion.
9. There are a lot of technical and language issues.
 - a. Milk consumption per capita is again stated as per head within the same sentence. Per capita means per head. Also, it is not stated whether this is per capita per day, month, or year.
 - b. Eukaryotic cells or their nuclei do not have a cell wall (see last part of the eighth paragraph of the introduction).
 - c. At one place, it is stated that the incidence of mastitis 'has become popular.' It is not clear what the authors really wanted to communicate.
 - d. In the study animals, it is suggested to rephrase 'no. of cattle categories' as 'holding-size categories.'
 - e. It is not clear what 'digging in detail in the area' means.
 - f. The proportions calculated are incorrect. When stating 'of these,' it should be the proportion within that group (and hence should add up to 100%), and not the proportion of the total no. of samples.
 - g. Language could be much improved.