

## REPLY

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# PCR, Antigen Detection and Peripheral Smear for Diagnosis of Malaria

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Dear Sir,

We thank Padukone *et al.* for their interest in our case report [1, 2]. We agree that ideally polymerase chain reaction (PCR) should be done to conclusively prove that a given individual has mono-infection with *Plasmodium vivax*. While the traditional smear and the rapid diagnostic tests can help diagnose the species responsible in majority of cases, low parasitemia is their Achille's heel. Also these tests have high specificity [3]. But the availability of the PCR remains only in research settings and their clinical use has not yet become routine. Elegant studies based on PCR detection have conclusively proven that vivax can cause severe manifestations of malaria [4]. To conclude, our patient definitely had *Plasmodium vivax* infection and evidence of acute pancreatitis. In absence of availability of PCR and in wake of recent conclusive evidence of severe manifestations occurring related to *Plasmodium vivax*, it is reasonable to conclude that

vivax infection might have been the cause of acute pancreatitis in our patient. Also, we feel that the need to obtain PCR before blaming vivax for severe malaria arises due to the traditional belief that *Plasmodium vivax* causes 'benign' malaria [5]. With clear evidence to the contrary, it is time that clinicians and researchers consider *Plasmodium vivax* as a possible cause of severe malaria.

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**Conflict of interest** The authors have no potential conflict of interest

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