Reviewer's report

**Title:** The rat STSL locus: characterization, chromosomal assignment, genetic variations in sitosterolemic hypertensive rats

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**Reviewer:** Alan Deng

**Level of interest:** not specified

**Advice on publication:** Other (see below)

I agree with Dr. Aitman's assessment of the manuscript in question. The key issue is that the authors need to show some genetic evidence that the gene could be linked to the disease. So far, the role of the STSL locus in sitosterolemia seems rather speculative. How could the authors distinguish mutations that would cause the phenotype from those that were simply represent strain variations, but have nothing to do with the said phenotype?

I understand that linkage and congenic strain studies will take time. But without any of that, it’s hard to evaluate the significance of the mutation. Also I do acknowledge the large amount of biochemical work done. Because of all these considerations, I’d recommend that the paper appears more suitable to a biochemical specialty journal.

**Competing interests:**

None declared.