Reviewer's report

Title: Herpes encephalitis presenting as mild aphasia

Version: 1 Date: 10 January 2006

Reviewer: elisabeth puchhammer

Reviewer's report:

General

In the case report "Herpes encephalitis presenting as mild aphasia" the authors describe the course of disease of a patient with confirmed herpes simplex encephalitis. The report is well written and although the reported case contains neither new nor unusual information the case report may be used for educational purposes. There are, however, some aspects which have to be considered prior to publication:

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

-It is state of the art that the diagnostics of Herpes simplex encephalitis has to be done by PCR from CSF at the first suspicion of this disease. In the present case report, however, the authors mention in view of virus diagnosis first that viral cultures were started, a methodology which is not successful and should not be used for diagnosis of this disease. Thus this part of the report should be changed as it might give the readers a wrong impression of what is important and what should be done to diagnose a suspected herpes encephalitis.

-Further it is not clear as written when the CSF was withdrawn and tested for HSV-DNA in the course of disease. This point should be included and PCR should be further pointed out as the really important virological diagnostic test.

-The authors state in the conclusion that HSV encephalitis is to be treated for 30 days with intravenous acyclovir eventually followed by oral acyclovir. The authors have to cite from whom - general official recommendations or scientific papers- these recommendations have been given.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

The part of the case presentation starting with "The patient emigrated..." to ".illnesses" could be omitted as not important for the case report.
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

**Level of interest:** An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.