Reviewer's report

Title: Testing for Allergic Disease: Parameters Considered and Test Value

Version: 2 Date: 22 April 2008

Reviewer: helen van hoecke

Reviewer's report:

This article poses a clear question and provides adequate answers. Methodology and statistical analysis in particular are well described.

- Minor essential revisions:
  Abstract versus methods section (instrument development: abstract mentions 9 patient profiles, methods section 11?)
  Discussion: add that this study is subject to some limitations: 1. response rate was quite low: only 50 out of 150 GPs after 2 invitations, 2. maybe the respondents had a specific interest in allergic rhinitis? It is not sure that the behaviour and opinions of the respondents is similar to that of the non-respondents and that of GPs in other geographical areas 3. data are collected from a survey and are based on self-reports and hypothetical patient profiles. It is well known that actual clinical practices may differ from answers in surveys.

- Discretionary revisions:
  Abstract, results, line 2: say family history instead of history
  Symptom duration: why such long periods (minimum of 5 years?) choosen? It seems very unlikely that a GP would wait so long to decide to test for allergy.
  Introduction: add that the current guidelines for allergic rhinitis (ARIA, Bousquet et al.) recommend allergy testing to confirm diagnosis.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests