Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 3 Date: 15 July 2008

Reviewer: Damien Jolley

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for your responses to my comments on the earlier version of this ms.

I have only minor remarks on the revision:

Results:

P 9: “one would expect that physicians would be 12.11 time more likely to consider the specific IgE blood test for patients with high symptom severity compared to patients with low symptom severity.” – OR=12.1 implies that high symptom severity is 11 times more likely than low symptom severity. Alternatively, say “12 times as likely”.

Conventionally, an odds ratio confidence interval which includes 1.0 is not considered “significant” (see top of p 10). The authors have not justified their decision to interpret “P=0.073” as “significant”.

Table 2: Figures reported in column “Odds Ratio” against baseline categories (eg “Low” for symptom severity, “< 5 yrs” for length of symptoms, “neither parent” for history of allergic rhinitis) seem to be the observed odds of category membership, not odds ratios. Usually, baseline categories are indicated by OR=1 in similar tables.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests