Reviewer's report

Title: Ulcerative colitis and irritable bowel patients exhibit distinct abnormalities of the gut microbiota

Version: 2 Date: 17 May 2010

Reviewer: Gunnar Loh

Reviewer's report:

As stated in my first report, the major findings reported in the manuscript "Ulcerative colitis and irritable bowel patients exhibit distinct abnormalities of the gut microbiota" are of confirmative nature. Both changes in gut microbiota composition in UC and IBS patients, including decreasing proportions of Bacteroides spp. in IBD patients, have been reported previously. The significance of the finding that UC and IBS patients differ in microbiota composition is not clear to me. The conclusion that Bacteroides spp. are involved in UC and IBD is based on non-significant differences in DGGE profiles between the study subjects and the sequencing of very short 16S rRNA gene fragments (~250bp) and therefore not necessarily valid.

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

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