Reviewer's report

Title: Development of a validated Patient Reported Symptom Metric for Pediatric Eosinophilic Esophagitis: Qualitative Methods

Version: 1 Date: 30 June 2011

Reviewer: Matko Marlais

Reviewer's report:

1. Overall this is a well conducted study which addresses an important issue. The manuscript is generally well written and clear. The authors are the first to rigorously develop such a metric for children with eosinophilic esophagitis and as such I believe this paper to be of importance to the scientific community.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

2. There is a discrepancy between the numbering of tables in the text and on the tables themselves. This appears to be a simple numbering error, in the section "Methods - Cognitive Interviews" the paper refers to table 2, I believe they mean table 1. In the section "Results – Cognitive Interview Patient Self-Report" the paper refers to table 3, I believe they mean table 2. My apologies if I have misunderstood this but I do believe that it needs review and correction.

- Minor Essential Revisions

3. In the section "Methods – Participants" the authors do not mention GERD as a co-morbidity which was excluded from the population studied. Was GERD excluded? If not, a brief explanation of the reasons for this would be helpful.

4. In the section "Methods – Cognitive Interviews" the authors should provide a brief description of the demographic details of this population of 39 children. This could be placed either in the methods but may be more appropriate in the results section. Age and sex data should be included, as well as the number of children in the 8-12 age category and the number in the 13-18 category.

5. In the pdf document I was able to review there is an unlabelled table which I presume to be table 3. In the final column, the question “How bad is the trouble swallowing?” is repeated, I believe that the upper should read something along the lines of “How often do you have trouble swallowing?” but this needs to be corrected. The bottom of table 3 appears to be cut off the page but I presume this is an issue with manuscript conversion.

- Discretionary Revisions

6. In the section "Methods – Focus Interviews" the authors describe how disagreements were resolved through discussion. Was there an arbiter who held the final decision when disagreements arose? If so, this could be noted.

7. In the section "Methods – Expert Opinion" it would be helpful to know how
many experts were consulted on this and how many were outside the authorship of the paper. I am presuming the 4 acknowledged experts are the ones referred to but this could be clarified in the manuscript.

8. I would argue that in the section “Conclusion” the authors could go further with their statement and suggest that PROs are more important as an outcome measure than histological findings, given the nature of this condition.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.