Reviewer's report

Title: Partially Responsive Celiac Disease Resulting from Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth and Lactose Intolerance

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Reviewer: Antonio Tursi

Reviewer's report:

General issues:
Ghoshal et al. reported two cases of celiac disease patients partially responsive to gluten-free diet (GFD) and affected by small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) (one patient) and lactose intolerance (the other one patient). They concluded that in celiac partially or unresponsive to GFD SIBO or lactose intolerance should be suspected. Although this last statement is condivisible, we should not never forget the risk of refractory celiac disease before to look for other causes of unresponsiveness to GFD.

Specific comments:

The authors should describe better the duodenal histology of the studied patient according to modified Marsh classification (Oberhuber G, Grandisch G, Vogelsang H. The histopathology of coeliac disease: time for a standardized report scheme for pathologists. Eur J Gastroenterol Hepatol 1999;11: 1185-94).

How many months the first patient was on GFD before to define the duodenal histology “normal”?

Did the authors evaluated anti-gliadin and/or anti-tissue transglutaminase antibodies?

What methods have been used to perform anti-endomysium evaluation?

The paragraph Discussion should be improved.
1. The authors stated that “Lactose intolerance could be another cause for such inadequate response to GFD. Whether this is primary or secondary lactose intolerance is matter of conjecture…….”. But what is the authors’ opinion about this matter?
2. None reference is described about the risk of refractory celiac disease in poor or unresponsive celiac patient to GFD. The authors should debate also this point.
3. Finally, the authors should explain better why SIBO or lactose intolerance may perpetuate the symptoms in these patients.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
None