Reviewer’s report

Title: Genetic risk factors for intestinal metaplasia in a high risk Singapore-Chinese population: a cohort study

Version: 1 Date: 16 July 2009

Reviewer: Carlo-Federico Zambon

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Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. Patients characteristics should be more detailed (e.g. mean age and range, definition of family history of gastric cancer, of drinking and smoking conditions, eventual previous eradication therapy for H. pylori).
2. Since biopsy specimens were available for IM assessment was H. pylori infection diagnosis performed also by mean of histology (gold standard)? Was it possible to correlate it with the serological findings?
3. Was serum PGA/PGC ratio considered in screening of high GC risk populations in combination with genetics and H pylori serological diagnosis?
4. When possible (IL-10 and STCH genes) haplotype analysis of SNPs might be relevant.
5. Data recently reported by from Hishida and colleagues (BMC Gastroenterol 2009 Jul 9) on PTPN11 polymorphism and GC risk in a numerous Japanese population should be discussed.

Minor Essential Revisions:
1. It appears that Authors have studied 18 polymorphisms (17 SNPs plus IL-1RN VNTR) in 14 candidate gene not 17 polymorphisms in 13 genes as stated in several occasion.
2. “. Carriers of the NQO1 609CT/TT genotype showed ...” should be changed to “carriers of the NQO1 609 T allele” or “carriers of the NQO1 C/T or T/T genotypes...”. This applies throughout the paper to all genes considered.
3. Table 3: IL1RN VNTR genotypes do not include allele 1. Is it absent from the Chinese studied population?
4. In background section relevant references should be cited for candidate genes with respect to their association with gastric cancer risk.

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