Reviewer's report

Title: Importance of Duodenal Bulb Biopsies in the Diagnosis of Celiac Disease in Clinical Practice

Version: 1 Date: 6 July 2009

Reviewer: Peter Green

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major revisions
The aim of this paper is to document that biopsy of the duodenal bulb increases the yield of celiac disease diagnosis in patients in whom the diagnosis is considered.

1. The study is a retrospective review of biopsy reports, performed without the aid of a pathologist. This must be stated.

2. Discussion
The authors accept that there may be differences in villous height in the duodenal bulb. Why is that? This must be referenced.

3. Page 6, second paragraph. Were the patients with Marsh I and II lesions diagnosed as celiac disease and commenced on a GF diet. This is somewhat controversial as villous atrophy is usually required for a dx of celiac disease Why were these patients diagnosed with celiac disease.

Discretionary revisions
There are many issues raised by gastroenterologists when one talks about biopsy of the duodenal bulb because we are taught NOT to biopsy the bulb. European studies have shown what the authors have shown. There is no new data presented in this paper.

Specific points
Results
There is insufficient pathological data presented
How many biopsy pieces were sufficiently oriented for assessment of villous atrophy?
There is no data as to the presence or absence of Brunner’s glands, and whether they were in the mucosa or submucosa and if they interfered with the villous architecture interpretation.
Was gastric metaplasia present? Did that interfere with the interpretation of villous atrophy.
These are all factors that are used to argue against taking duodenal bulbar biopsies.
A pathologist should review the slides to record this data

**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'