Reviewer's report

Title: Birth characteristics and the risk of childhood leukaemias and lymphomas in New Zealand: a case-control study.

Version: Date: 22 August 2006
Reviewer: Charles A Stillier

Reviewer's report:

General
In general, comments on the previous version have been satisfactorily taken into account. The revised description of age matching of controls is acceptable.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
None.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Page 6, last line and Page 7, lines 1-2. This sentence needs to be rewritten, since presumably all places are within some boundaries. Maybe ‘... classified as urban or non-urban, according to whether it lay within an urban or non-urban area as defined by the statistical boundaries ...’

Page 9, sentence 1. Strictly speaking, not only are data on parity missing if the parents were unmarried at the birth of the index child, but also the total parity of the mother will be underestimated if she had previous livebirths outside marriage or within an earlier marriage. The fact that this makes the results on parity not strictly comparable with those of some other studies needs to be taken up briefly in Page 9, paragraph 2.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
Page 6, lines 9-10 from end. This sentence should perhaps be slightly rewritten to avoid repetition of the word ‘detail[s]’ without loss of clarity.

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: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests