Reviewer’s report

Title: Association of Circulating Chlamydia pneumoniae DNA with Cardiovascular Disease: A Systematic Review.

Authors:

Marek Smieja (smiejam@mcmaster.ca)
James B Mahony (mahonyj@mcmaster.ca)
Astrid Petrich (petricha@mcmaster.ca)
Jens Boman (jens.boman@climi.umu.se)
Max Chernesky (chernesk@mcmaster.ca)

Version: 2 Date: 31 Jul 2002

Reviewer: Prof Rosa Sessa

Level of interest: A paper of considerable general medical or scientific interest

Advice on publication: Other (see below)

Advice on publication: Accepted after revisions

General Comments

This is an interesting paper dealing with the important aspect of whether Chlamydia pneumoniae DNA detection in peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMC) is associated to cardiovascular diseases. With this aim, the authors re-examined previously published studies by meta-regression analysis and found that "circulating DNA prevalence was no higher among cardiovascular patients than among controls, although exclusion of a single study yielded a relatively strong, highly statistically difference...". This "single" outlier study is a "manuscript in preparation" (should not be included in the reference list) and would be therefore interesting to include more details in the manuscript. The other suggestion I wish to make is that in the discussion the authors should balance criticisms to the association of C. pneumoniae DNA in PBMC with cardiovascular diseases with criticisms of the "single outlier study". The other weak point of this manuscript is in the "Conclusions" where I would expect their thoughts and a suggestion on how to solve this issue rather than a mere summary of the problems.

Minor points, although critical for acceptance, are the correctness of citations: update some of the references (e.g., two of the three papers referred as abstracts, Freidank et al. 2000 and Sessa et al. 2000, are now fully published and updated: Freidank et al., Eur J Clin Microbiol Infect Dis 2002, 21: 60-62; Sessa et al., Atherosclerosis 2001, 159: 521-525); remove from the 'reference list' the manuscript in preparation (26), submitted (8) or double quoted (24 and 27); include in the 'reference list' all the papers quoted in the text or in the tables (Campbell, ??; Maraha, 2001); verify the consistency between reference and number (Maass is referred as 21, but is 28) and others. All these inconsistencies are disturbing and must be avoided. In the same line there are many small inaccuracies in the data (e.g., in table 2, the prevalence related to Rassu, 2001, is 46.1% and not 43.2, in the text, then, is reported as 41.5 !!). I would strongly suggest the authors to revise the entire manuscript in order to verify the correctness of the data.
Competing interests:

None declared.