Reviewer's report

Title: Epidemiological evidence of higher susceptibility to vCJD in the young

Version: 1 Date: 19 May 2004

Reviewer: Roland L SALMON

Reviewer's report:

General
Explaining the basis of the observed age distribution of cases in vCJD is important both to understanding the origins of the epidemic (and thus deriving the lessons for its prevention) and for the light it sheds on the pathogenesis of prion diseases. By combining observed data from the National CJD Surveillance Unit with data from the MRC Unit at Cambridge on UK dietary exposure, the authors have made a persuasive demonstration of changing susceptibility, peaking at about 8 years of age and remaining high throughout the teenage years.

It is logically laid out and clearly written. My only reservation is that I am a field epidemiologist. Thus, I am conscious that specialists in modelling tend to have strong views about the appropriateness or otherwise of the equations used to represent any disease process and that as the field has developed so have certain conventions about this. I would therefore suggest seeking the view of a specialist reviewer and I have ticked the statistical review box accordingly.

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)
None.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
None.

What next?: Accept without revision

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes

Declaration of competing interests:
None