Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence and distribution of high-risk Human papilloma virus (HPV) types in invasive squamous cell carcinoma of the cervix and in normal women in Andhra Pradesh, India

Version: 2 Date: 30 June 2005

Reviewer: gary M clifford

Reviewer’s report:

General

The authors have performed a well-designed, albeit relatively small, study of HPV type distribution in a series of Indian cervical cancer cases. There is not a lot of this type of data from India, which suffers a large part of the worldwide cervical cancer burden, so it is very relevant for HPV vaccination plans.

The comparison of self-collected and clinician-collected samples in the community is also very important in this population, as self-collected samples may be the only way to get a good coverage of any HPV-based screening program (given the unwillingness of many women to undergo an exam)

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

The sentence "It is interesting to notethat HPV73...." does not really belong in the results. This is further confused by the fact that HPV73 is reported as MM9 in the table.

The prevalence of HPV found in this Indian community (i.e. approximately 10%) was not discussed in comparison with the other cited studies among rural Indian women (e.g. Franceschi et al).

Is the prevalence of high-risk HPV similar in these different populations? Is the age-specific pattern similar?

Also, are the authors able to estimate the participation rate of women from the community? This would help the understanding of the studies representativeness.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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