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: 26 August 2005

**Reviewer:** Elizabeth Maloney

**Reviewer's report:**

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

METHODS. Collection of Specimens. The authors should specify if tissue biopsy specimens were collected from all women undergoing surgery at the regional MNJ Cancer Hospital, or if some women refused to participate or had inadequate specimens for testing. Along those same lines, do the 42 histopathologically proven cases of squamous cell carcinomas represent all identified cases, or a subset of all such cases who agreed to participate.

METHODS. Collection of Specimens. The authors refer the readers to a submitted manuscript for more details on the community-based cervical cancer screening pilot study. The authors should provide adequate detail about study design and subject selection in the community study. How were study participants selected? What was the participation rate among the eligible target population? Over what period of time was this study conducted?

METHODS. The authors omitted a section for Statistical Methods. Acknowledging that this paper is predominantly a descriptive study, a kappa statistic was used and it should be described in the methods section. Additionally, the authors provide a table of HPV DNA prevalence by age group. It would be of interest to conduct a statistical test to see if prevalence varies significantly by age, since the authors state that it does not but do not include a p-value to support that statement. Authors should state what software was used to compute frequencies and kappa statistic.

RESULTS. The prevalence of major high-risk HPV types detected in the cervical cancers are not consistently reported in the Abstract, Results and Tables. The biggest discrepancy is between the Abstract and the Results. The Tables should report prevalence carried out to one decimal point as reported elsewhere in the manuscript.

RESULTS. The authors should describe the demographic distributions of women participants in the community sample within the text of the Results section. Were these women of similar socioeconomic status as the women participants in the cervical cancer study?

**Minor Essential Revisions**

No mention of consent was included in the Methods Section.

Accept after major compulsory revisions are completed.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Declaration of competing interests:**

“I declare that I have no competing interests”.