Reviewer's report

Title: Adult systemic cat scratch disease associated with therapy for hepatitis C

Version: 1 Date: 21 November 2006

Reviewer: Pierluigi Toniutto

Reviewer's report:

General
The paper describes a case of cat scratch disease with unusual clinical manifestations that had occurred in an adult patient treated with Peylated Interferon alpha 2b plus ribavirin for chronic hepatitis C. The authors highlight the fact that a clinician should be aware of the possibility that in patients undergoing immune-regulatory treatments, such as those adopted in this case, a frequent disease could be associated with unusual clinical manifestations.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. Insufficient details are reported about the previous patient’s history. In particular the dosage and the duration of the antiviral treatment adopted are not mentioned. The time elapsed from the initial manifestations of the disease to the Buffalo Hospital admission is not described. Moreover, it is obscure to the reader if cutaneous manifestations of cat scratch disease were observable at any time of the illness. The fact is of paramount importance since it would permit an early and correct diagnostic suspicion without delay.
2. It is well known that flu-like symptoms and possible immunological manifestations related to interferon treatment for chronic hepatitis C are observable in the first months of therapy. Thus, it is surprising that in this patient the first suspected diagnosis of lymphadenopathy was interpreted as a side effect of pegylated interferon treatment. If this was the case, was the antiviral therapy discontinued or not?

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
At our knowledge, cat scratch disease is not a common condition in adults. Therefore the conclusions reported in the abstract and in the background of the text should be changed according to those presented at the end of the text.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory 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.