Reviewer's report

Title: The influence of TNF-alpha gene polymorphism to the occurrence and progress of SARS-Cov infection: a case-control study

Version: 1 Date: 3 November 2007

Reviewer: Friedemann Weber

Reviewer's report:

General
In this manuscript by Wang et al., the role of polymorphisms in the TNF-alpha gene of SARS victims for the development of ILF and FHN is studied. No strong association was found between TNF polymorphisms or corticosteroid treatment and these symptoms, with the possible exception of FHN for which a slight correlation as found. Numbers are however too low for a definite conclusion in the latter point.

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

- the title is misleading as there is no influence of the TNF gene on SARS prognosis
- abstract is too long
- the authors should make a major effort to improve their writing (e.g. first lines of the intro: ...there may deduce that this gene may associate...The over express...badness in the process of disease recovery...etc). Misleading expressions and extensive usage of badly explained abbreviations make it hard for the reader to follow the logic of the work.
- "as Lee described..." is also not a good writing style
- reference lacking for the 21% ILF occurrence in cured SARS patients (intro)
- “Hormone usage” should be explained better in the main text, not just the Methods part
- too much introduction in the discussion part

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

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: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests