Reviewer's report

Title: Clinical Characteristics of the Autumn-Winter Type Scrub Typhus Cases in South of Shandong Province, Northern China

Version: 2 Date: 28 January 2009

Reviewer: Motohiko Ogawa

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

The authors reported clinical characteristics of scrub typhus cases in China. This report showed the cases in Shandong Province and they are the Autumn-Winter Type.

It would be better to describe the previous Summer type and then summarize the difference between the Summer and the Autumn-Winter types if the authors focus on the Autumn-Winter Types. I think that the revised version still does not describe the difference or highlight specific features of each type clearly, especially about infected or causative strains relating to the clinical features, geographical distributions of the patients and vectors. As the authors suggested, in Japan and Korea; the neighbor countries having very similar climates, Autumn-Winter type is very common and well described in some reports. I recommend that the authors should refer some more epidemiological reports about this type of these countries.

Minor Revisions

[Abstract]
1. P5 L5 and 15
Lymphadenopathy was observed in 60.6% of cases and the authors concluded it was typical major symptoms. I wonder 60.6% is high or not.

2. P5 in Conclusion
Most parts described common clinical features of scrub typhus, not only in Autumn-Winter type. It would helpful for readers to highlight the difference clearly.

3. P5 in conclusion
As far as I know, CRP, liver enzyme elevations are also typical major symptoms of scrub typhus. Was there no important information in this type?

[Background]
4. P6
There is a few information about clinical characteristics, infected strains and epidemiological aspects of Summer type although the authors discussed those of
Autumn-Winter type in this article. I think that it would be greatly helpful for readers to describe them.

[Material and Methods]
5. P8
Is there any difference between yearly cases?

6. P8
Why did you use Karp, Kato and Gilliam strains for IF? Are they the causative strains in China? It would be better to comment about the causative strain types in China in the Background section if the authors show some data about it (Ex. In result section of PCR and RFLP)

[Discussion]
P13 I wonder why there are two peaks in Japan although one peak in China. This difference seems very interesting. It would be better to make this part of discussion more clearly.

P14 maculopapular rashes, chills,.....occured more frequently. Is this related to the isolated strain, Kawasaki? It would be helpful for readers if some information of this strain were provided.

P16 Eschars distribution on body is very interesting. Especially there is difference between men and women. Is there any relation to their job styles?

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.