Reviewer's report

Title: Spinocerebellar ataxia type 17: Reduced penetrance of an unstable Gln49 SCA17 allele and report of a core founder haplotype

Version: 2 Date: 28 April 2005

Reviewer: Arnulf Koeppen

Reviewer's report:

General
The authors have made several desirable changes but also introduced other problems, largely with their English and style. I strongly recommend that they use an English version of a "spell-checker" lest entries like "likelyhood" are retained. Please note the section "conclusions" under Abstract. None of these sentences make sense. It should always be "76-year-old...etc" notwithstanding the seeming plural of the years (76 years old man etc is always incorrect). The manuscript consolidates family A (current report), family B (prior report), and a sporadic case, a woman H. There are no objections to take data from three different sources and attempt a compact presentation. The authors should more clearly state their intention in "background". As it stands now, haplotype analysis appears almost as an afterthought at the end of "Background". The last sentence under "Discussion" is quite complex and difficult to understand. Simplification is needed. The conclusion about the SCA-17 patient reported by Koide et al (ref 7 in this paper) should be reworded. The style of "So, the first published case etc..." is unacceptable. The word "conception" in the "Authors' contributions" should be replaced by "concept". I strongly urge the authors to heed all comments and to try to present their important message in a more acceptable way. The figure in my copy was too small for printing in a journal.

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

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 of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
no conflict of interest