Reviewer’s report

Title: An investigation of polymorphisms in the 17q11.2-12 CC chemokine gene cluster for association with multiple sclerosis in Australians

Version: 1 Date: 30 June 2006

Reviewer: Richard M Ransohoff

Reviewer’s report:

General

This is an exemplary BMC manuscript, because it’s interesting, well done, lucidly presented and contains information that will be useful beyond the immediate community of MS-genetics or chemokine-genetics researchers. The inclusion of foundation work for other genetic studies of the CC locus is admirable.

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

None

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

1. Most of the introduction and discussion are very well-written, accurate and comprehensive. However, the discussion of chemokines important in EAE (p.2 of Intro) lacks rigor. Most studies of CCL3, CCL4 and CCL5 in EAE have been negative. They are certainly present in affected tissue, but knockout and interventional studies have mainly been negative.

2. Levels of CC chemokines are not uniformly 'elevated' as stated, in the CSF of MS patients. Rather, some are 'altered', and one chemokine of interest for the current study is reduced as a reflection of MS disease state (Sorenson et al. J Clin Invest, 1999) and MS disease activity (Sorenson, Eur J Neurol, 2001), possibly because of consumption by CCR2+ migrating cells (Mahad et al. Brain, 2006).

3. Authors note that 14 of '24' CC chemokines are encoded at Chr 17q11.2-12, while 28 CC chemokines have been described.


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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

None

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests.