Reviewer’s report

Title: A new 500kb haplotype associated with high CD8+ T-lymphocyte numbers predicts a less severe expression of hereditary hemochromatosis

Version: 2 Date: 18 September 2008

Reviewer: K Sigvard Olsson

Reviewer’s report:

A minor detail, concerning the concept “ethnically different”. Its seems as if the authors want to remain in their opinion that descendants to Europeans in Vancouver are ethnically different from those in northern Portugal. “ethnically different” still appears in the abstract, page 4, introduction, page 6, page 16, page 19 even if the authors now discuss the matter.

I maintain the view that one should be careful to characterize the patients from the appearance of symptoms because several of them are unspecific, ref 10,11. However, it now appears from the corrections of page 8, that the two groups with or without symptoms seem to differ with regard to the degree of iron loading, which is the relevant point. The method used by the authors, TBIS, is also the best available. The corrections lead to an improvement.

The message is strengthened when the two patient series are grouped together, page 18, all patients with severe iron overload (TBIS>5g) were homozygous for AAT.

I appreciate that the authors now discuss the issue which of the factors that is the modifier.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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