Reviewer's report

Title: Minimal change nephrotic syndrome in an 82 year old patient following a tetanus-diphteria-poliomyelitis-vaccination

Version: 1 Date: 11 February 2009

Reviewer: Joan Robinson

Reviewer's report:

The authors describe an 82-yr-old woman with biopsy-proven MCNS about 6 weeks after a vaccine. They have reviewed the literature for similar cases and suggest that various vaccines might be a cause of MCNS.

Major compulsory revisions:

1. How was the literature reviewed to find similar cases? I would add that in a Methods section as it is a major part of the manuscript. There appear to be some cases from the 1960’s related to smallpox and polio vaccines that are not mentioned.

2. In the discussion, I would like to see more of an explanation about possible pathophysiology. Are there any tests that could be done on biopsies in a research setting to try to demonstrate if this theory is correct?

3. The discussion should actually discuss the cases from Table 1. Does the wide variation in time of onset post-vaccine from a few hours to 4 months make sense? Is it a coincidence that none of the vaccines in the table are live.

4. What is the take-home message? Should vaccines be avoided? How can we improve pick-up of cases if this is a real association?


6. I am not sure that I agree that finding more cases will elucidate the pathophysiology. Please explain what you mean.

Minor essential revisions:

1. Numbering the pages would make it easier for the reviewer to provide comments
2. The last line of the abstract is missing the word “of”.
3. The first line of the Case Presentation part of the abstract uses the word “nephritis” where I think you mean “Nephrotic”.
4. “Creatinine clearance” does not need a capital “C”.
5. “no signs for an active sediment” should be “no signs off…”
6. “severe reaction after vaccination on renal function” is awkward. Please re-word.

Table 1 – needs a title
-need to clarify what the biopsies showed
-need to clarify that top row refers to vaccines
-need to be more uniform in use of capitals
-how long after the second dose of hepatitis B vaccine did the fifth case occur?

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests. Joan Robinson