Reviewer's report

Title: Urinary Transforming Growth Factor-beta 1 (TGF-b1) as a marker of response to immunosuppressive treatment in patients with crescentic nephritis.

Version: 1 Date: 19 April 2005

Reviewer: meguid El Nahas

Reviewer's report:

General

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

This is at best a preliminary report of an observation of TGFbeta levels in patients with vasculitis and impaired renal function.
1. The number of patients is far too small for any meaningful statistical analysis.
2. Conventional outcome parameters are not fully explored, instead the author choose to study the predictive values of urinary TGFbeta1.

BVAS (Birmingham Vasculitis Score) could be equally relevant and predictive?!
3. Histological details are scanty and not data is given on the predictive value of percentage of crescents or necrosis.
4. No results are given on plasma TGFbeta1 although the authors claim to have measured it.
5. The urine TGFbeta1 levels should be expressed as median and CI, as they are obviously not normally distributed. This would mean than a non-parametric test should be used to evaluate the data statistically.
6. Urinary TGFbeta may be better expressed per unit of urine creatinine rather than per 24h volume.
5. No data is given on the quantitative immunohistochemical analysis; is it possible that similar changes are observed in the kidneys that parallel the observed changes in TGFbeta1 in the urine? Clearly, more detailed analysis and a more comprehensive data presentation and inclusion should be considered.

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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)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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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 limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No
Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'