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: 2 Date: 7 July 2005

Reviewer: Meguid El Nahas

Reviewer's report:

General
This is an interesting observation highlighting links between TGFbeta1 and crescentic glomerulonephritis. The research is conducted by a group of good reputation and expertise in the field. Dr Goumenos has an excellent track record in research into renal fibrosis.

The study’s limitations include:
1. The small of patients which makes statistical analysis subject to potential error.
2. The fact that the authors use parametric analysis of the data when the data are not always normally distributed; data on urinary TGFbeta1 shows very large SD.
3. The immunohistochemical analysis should be solely qualitative and not quantitative as human percutaneous biopsy material’s size precludes accurate quantitation of the immunostaining. This may also explain the lack of correlations between tissue and urinary TGF beta1 levels.
4. The authors refer to correlation analyses without giving the data.
5. The authors should also attempt to give predictive values (R2) for baseline urinary TGFbeta1 values and changes in renal function in responders.
6. Clinically, the test would add little to the known prognostic parameters such as sCr at presentation and histological changes as confirmed by the authors.

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

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 limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No