Reviewer’s report

Title: An examination of the Apo-1/Fas promoter Mva I polymorphism in Japanese patients with multiple sclerosis

Authors:
Masaaki Niino (niino@med.hokudai.ac.jp)
Seiji Kikuchi (skikuti@med.hokudai.ac.jp)
Toshiyuki Fukazawa (fukazawa@my.email.ne.jp)
Ryuji Miyagishi (miyagisi@med.hokudai.ac.jp)
Ichiro Yabe (yabe@med.hokudai.ac.jp)
Kunio Tashiro (tashiro@med.hokudai.ac.jp)

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Reviewer: Mr Miguel Lucas

Level of interest: A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Advice on publication: Accept after discretionary revisions

This is a well-done work that is based in the interest of apoptosis in MS and other autoimmune diseases. The apoptotic mechanism in the pathogeneses of MS is a sound hypothesis to select Fas as a candidate gene for susceptibility to MS. The lack of association of Fas to MS pointed in the paper of Niino et al. does not exclude the association to other genes of the apoptotic pathway and this should be stated in the text.

It is important to consider the results even in small groups like this for later meta analysis. The association studies can be impaired by population stratification but this problem can be overcome by transmission disequilibrium tests (TDT) in nuclear families. The analyses of TDT in trios of MS nuclear families should be done in future studies.

Discretionary revisions: A minor point is to include the degree of significance of the frequency of HLADRB1501 positive patients, in their MS population, somewhere in table 4 or in the text and to comment it in the discussion section.

Competing interests:

None declared.