Reviewer's report

Title: Impact of the clinical context on the 14-3-3 test, based on the analysis of a Spanish cohort of suspected sporadic CJD patients

Version: 1 Date: 3 May 2006

Reviewer: Pierluigi Gambetti

Reviewer's report:

General

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1) The statistical basis for this observation is totally dependant on where the break-point is placed, differentiating positive versus negative protein 14-3-3 levels. This has been inadequately described. What are the reference standards (p5) and on what basis are weakly positive samples considered negative? These points require carefully documentation.
2) It is well known that the positive predictive value (PPV) decreases as a test is applied to populations with lower incidence of disease. Consequently, the section “Influence of the clinical context on the 14-3-3 test” (p6) and table 4 can be reduced to a sentence or two.
3) There is repetition in the paper, e.g. paragraph 4 (p4) and Figure 1, also “Demographic and clinical data” (p5) and Figure 2. The section “Analysis of the polymorphism at codon 129 of PRNP” is not needed.

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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 importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes