Reviewer's report

Title: Traditional Cantonese Diet and Nasopharyngeal Carcinoma Risk: a Large-scale Case-control Study in Guangdong, China

Version: 1 Date: 21 April 2010

Reviewer: Allan Hildesheim

Reviewer's report:

The authors present a study to assess Cantonese-style diet and its potential influence on NPC risk in a hospital-based case-control study. 1387 eligible cases identified between October 2005 and January 2007 and 1459 controls from Guangdong province were recruited. Controls were matched on age, sex, education, dialect, and household type. Structured interviews were conducted to collect lifestyle information including dietary habits during childhood (<12 years) and adulthood based on a five intake frequency category (never, sometimes, monthly, weekly, and daily). Overall, the authors were able to replicate previous associations between specific dietary intakes and NPC.

Despite the limitations listed below, this study includes a large sample size, especially of cases given the rarity of the disease. The discussion section details nicely the limitations of the study. In addition, the authors provide another layer of evidence to the complexity of the association between herbal diet and NPC.

REPORT TEMPLATE
--------------
- Major Compulsory Revisions
  1. More details of the questionnaire needs to be provided given that the data for analyses of this paper is entirely based on this collection, i.e., what types of food items/categories were included in the questionnaire.
  2. Details of how categories were combined for analysis. Notice that in Table 2, not all 5 categories from questionnaire actually used. Explain why there are variations in the grouping of frequency from one food type to another? For example, salted fish uses groupings of less than monthly (reference), monthly, and weekly or more versus Preserved/cured meat uses less than monthly (reference) and monthly or more. There should be standardization in the reporting.
  3. Was diet during childhood, adulthood, or both used for the analysis reported in Table 4?

- Minor Essential Revisions
  1. P-trend could be calculated in table 2 to determine possible dose-response.
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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