Reviewer’s report

Title: Association between novel PLCE1 variants identified in published esophageal cancer genome-wide association studies and risk of squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck

Version: 1 Date: 29 January 2011

Reviewer: li dong wang

Reviewer’s report:

The authors here reported that three PLCE1 SNPs may have a joint effect on the risk of SCCHN from non-Hispanic white population. They also stratified the significance of these variant SNPs by smoking and alcohol exposure.

The manuscript should be acceptable after minor revision. The major concerns are as follows:

1. It is not appropriate to imply the HPV infection and PLCE1 variants with SCCHN without any supporting data. The author should rewritten the conclusions, just focus on the important findings.

2. In the sections of “Abstract” and “Background”, the author described that esophageal squamous cell carcinoma and gastric cardia adenocarcinoma may share some similar risk factors with SCCHN, which should be described more clearly with literature findings.

3. Obviously, non-Hispanic white population may be very different with Chinese people in many aspects, especially on the etiology of esophageal and gastric cardia cancers and SCCHN. It would be better to describe these differences more in detail in the “Background” or “Discussion” sections.

4. The P value for rs2274223 and rs11599672 should be added.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.