Reviewer's report

Title: ATM variants and cancer risk in breast cancer patients from Southern Finland

Version: 1 Date: 9 May 2006

Reviewer: Janet Hall

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General:
The manuscript of Tommiska et al., evaluates the frequency of the 5557G>A and ivs38-8T>C variants in the ATM gene in a cohort of breast cancer (BC) patients. In addition the entire ATM gene was screened in 47 familial BC cases and haplotypes constructed for these individuals. The frequency of 4 rare variants identified was determined in additional BC cases and controls. Neither of the two common variants, nor any of the haplotypes were associated with altered risk and the rare variants were found in only one patient of over 250 familial patients studied and not among controls.

Major compulsory revisions:
None

Minor essential revisions:
There should be some comment on the statistical power of the study to draw conclusions about ATM haplotypes when these are determined in only 47 breast cancer patients.

Discretionary Revisions:
Were a proportion of the results confirmed by sequencing?
The 5557 variant allele were found in a total of 6 haplotypes, 3 of which also contained the variant allele of ivs38-8, perhaps the text on page 9 could be edited so that this is clearer.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests