Title: Etiological study of esophageal squamous cell carcinoma in an endemic region: a population-based case control study in Huaian, China

Version: 3 Date: 4 December 2006
Reviewer: Joanna Moschandreas

Reviewer's report:

General
The statistical methods used are valid (on the whole, see my comment in Minor Essential Revisions though) and the results are presented with clarity and are correctly interpreted. The authors' comment in the discussion regarding sample size is sufficient. 1:m matching could have been used (m>1), but the gain in power would be relatively small.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

It seems likely that the stratified analyses that included interactions in the multivariable models were overfitted (the total number of terms is not stated). I would suggest that the relevant sections be omitted.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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.