Reviewer's report

Title: Common NOD2/CARD15 variants are not associated with susceptibility or the clinicopathologic characteristics of sporadic colorectal cancer in Hungarian patients

Version: 1 Date: 30 January 2007

Reviewer: Maurizio Genuardi

Reviewer's report:

General

The authors report on a study aimed at establishing whether NOD2/CARD15 sequence variants conferring an increased risk for Crohn disease are associated with colorectal cancer susceptibility in Hungary. Two SNPs were typed in a set of sporadic cases and in healthy controls, and no association was detected. These results contrast with data obtained on Polish and Greek patients, but are in agreement with a similar study conducted in Finland.

Although the results are negative, in principle they are probably worth publication, since they imply that either previous positive results were due to methodological flaws, which are quite common in association studies, or that there are substantial differences in the genes involved in colorectal cancer susceptibility among populations.

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

However, it is not clear why SNP8 was not investigated in this study. This contrasts with the statement in the last sentence of the introduction ("... our aim was to investigate the presence of the three common variants..."). Data on SNP8 should be reported for the sake of completeness and to allow full comparison among different studies.

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

Other suggestions:
- The gene symbols should be written in italics
- Insert results of statistical analysis in Table 2 (why is the male/female ratio so high in carriers?)
- Controls should be selected for the absence of family history of colorectal cancer as well.

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 whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

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