Reviewer's report

Title: Subacute Sclerosing Panencephalitis: Results of the Canadian Paediatric Surveillance Program and review of the literature.

Version: 5 Date: 24 September 2005

Reviewer: Brenda Banwell

Reviewer's report:

General
Campbell et al. have revised the manuscript in accordance with the reviewer's comments. The manuscript is much shorter and more focussed. The authors have provided a useful overview of SSPE for the paediatric consultant audience. Overall, the manuscript reads well.

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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)

1. A more detailed description of the brain biopsy in Case 4 is still not included. Even if the pathology did not specifically support SSPE, it would be of interest to know what it did show. Perhaps a brief discussion of what would be expected in the biopsy would also be of interest.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. I feel a paragraph on the SSPE in children vaccinated for measles, and who did not experience natural infection, should be included. The authors do not comment on the incidence and possible biological etiology of presumed vaccine-associated SSPE. While these children may have experienced subclinical natural measles infection prior to vaccination, vaccine-related SSPE has been suggested. Given that one of the four children in this series fits into this category, I feel the paper would be enhanced by a discussion of this issue.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'