Reviewer's report

Title: Cough and reflux esophagitis in children: their co-existence and airway cellularity

Version: 3 Date: 20 December 2005

Reviewer: Alyn H Morice

Reviewer's report:

General
A big study with useful information

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
The data is presented as G+ or G- when in fact the variable measured is oesophagitis. There is a long discussion about how to quantify GER. In my view the tests used are incapable of measuring GER related to cough (i.e., there is no Gold Standard) this is not a block to publication however but to refer to data as G+ when it is really RE+ is very misleading

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
As might be anticipated from the above the negative slant on the interpretation is not shared by this referee. My interpretation is cough is one symptom produced by reflux. They show a very high incidence of cough in these kids with other reflux symptoms. Ockham's razor says it's reflux. Oesophagitis is unrelated to the type of reflux producing cough. Similarly our current tests and treatment do not reveal reflux cough.
How the bugs get there is very interesting and needs more thought

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
None