Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence of asthma and allergies in the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities in Cyprus: a bi-communal cross-sectional study.

Version: 2 Date: 15 January 2013

Reviewer: Alejandro Videla

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Title page: Add the word “children of Greek- Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities”

2. Abstract: the conclusions should state clearly that: 1) the prevalence of respiratory outcomes in the G/C group was lower that the T/C group 2) The results seem to contradict the hygiene hypothesis as the most educated and urban located population had the lower prevalence

3. Methods section: Definition of predictor variables: please explain more clearly if the child or the parent reported the risk factors, specially in terms of smoking exposure. It seems obvious that the parent described them , but the last paragraph inclines the reader to think that the risk factors were answered by the parents only for the 7 – 8 year old children.

4. Statistical analysis: Rephrase the analysis strategy in a more straightforward manner: i.e: “A multiple logistic regression (stepwise?) analysis was applied to estimate the association between risk factors and outcomes”. I believe adjustment is a better term that effect modification in order to describe the analysis process.

5. Results: Population characteristics: The first phrase would be put at the end of the paragraph for clarity. First enumerate all the protective factors and the prevalence and at the end conclude saying that protective factors were more prevalent in the T/C community

- Minor Essential Revisions

1. Background section: First paragraph: Use “innate advantage” instead of “nativity”

2. Methods section: Study population: include information on validation of the Greek and Turkish versions of the ISAAC

3. Methods section: Definition of predictor variables: instead of “profile the communities” in “order to describe the prevalence of risk factors”

- Discretionary Revisions

1. Discussion: I believe the main interest of the study is describing the results of a natural experiment in which two communities with some degree of common
racial background and living in closer areas – with different lifestyles - have different prevalences of allergy and asthma, and the results seem to contradict the hygiene hypothesis. As this results are challenging, I believe the authors should propose possible explanations for the phenomenon, and search the previous literature for similar results. Maybe the racial background has any influence in modulating the response to the risk (or protective) factors.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

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