Reviewer's report

Title: Varicose Veins in Hairdressers and Associated Risk Factors: A Cross-sectional Study

Version: 7 Date: 27 June 2014

Reviewer: Steven Lamm

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Review 2 (6.27.14) – Varicose Veins in South Taiwan Hairdressers

1. Please insert as Table one a description of the distribution of the subjects with number in each age interval, number with V V, and number without V V to give the reader an overview of the findings. Give age-strata prevalence and whatever other age-stratified information you wish.

2. List items in the same order in the text and in the tables. See Table 1.

3. Number of pregnancies should be a categorical variable, not a continuous one.

4. Why is constipation a variable? Is that current constipation or ever constipation, or what? It is not mentioned in the introduction as an a priori risk factor.

5. The percentages in the abstract and text about prevalence of doing housework in a standing position should also be in the table. That variable is confusing. Isn’t all housework done standing up? Give the specific wording of the question answered.

6. If the number of monthly standing work hours is supposed to be quintiles, the cut at 168 should be higher in Table 4. If the strata were set in Table 5, say so.

7. In Table 5, the difference in number of years working as a hairdresser of 31-42 and 43-57 is no difference, therefore do not emphasize it.

8. What are the limiting factors such that the multiple regression analyses include only 121 of the 182 study subjects.

9. It is disturbing that the cases were interview by the physicians who got complete information and the non-cases were interviewed by others who got incomplete information. Along with drinking, the two critical variables – family history and standing hours – have the most missing information. Include that in your discussion.

10. Why is standing house work both a continuous and a categorical variable?

11. The methods section should include a detailed description of the standing housework variable. Table 1 indicates no difference in standing hours per week, yet significant difference in standing hours per month. That sounds like the real difference is the number of days worked per month. If the standing hours per week is 12 and the standing hours per month is 214, then each month must have 17 weeks. Something is not right here. This distinction should become perfectly
clear. From a policy point, will one suggest fewer standing work hours per day or fewer work days per month, or what?

12. This paper should be publishable after the above issues are dealt with and no other become apparent.