Reviewer’s report

Title: Allergic conditions and risk of hematological malignancies in adults: a cohort study

Version: 1 Date: 14 June 2004

Reviewer: Lin Fritschi

Reviewer’s report:

General

This was a prospective cohort study of Swedish twins. The exposure of interest was self-reported asthma, hay fever, eczema and hives. The outcome was diagnosis of leukaemia, NHL, HD or myeloma. No results were shown for HD because there were only 10 cases.

The study has large numbers, is prospective and is analysed and reported appropriately. My queries are minor only.

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

NONE

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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)

Table 1 would be easier to understand if it also included percent of people reporting the condition rather than number.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. Did you examine the risks of all haematological malignancies combined? This information would be interesting.
2. What is the rationale for analysing CLL separately?
3. Is there any reason that findings from a study of twins would not be generalizable to the general population? Is the prevalence of the allergic conditions similar in twins to others?
4. It would be preferable to put positive statements in the conclusion rather than negative ones.

Specifically, I think it would be more clear if you would omit the second part of the first sentence. “In summary, finding from our cohort study suggest that chronic antigenic stimulation from allergic conditions might increase the risk of some hematological malignancies.”

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No
Declaration of competing interests:
None