Reviewer’s report

Title: Chronic virus infections suppress atopy but not asthma in a set of children from a large Latin American city

Version: 2 Date: 28 September 2010

Reviewer: Bulent Enis Sekerel

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript aims to investigate whether prevention of asthma development is contributed by viral infection. The authors performed a cross sectional survey where they looked for the presence of SPT and sIgE positivity, history of asthma like symptoms and seropositivity for certain viruses.

Great effort was performed for the study and the questionnaire used is appropriate. Informed consent was obtained from ethical review board.

The major problem with methodology is the timing where they could not confirm whether viruses were exposed before or after development of asthma. This has been touched at the discussion section.

I wonder whether SPT panel is informative. For instance; grass (graminae), ragweed allergen were not included in SPT panel. European and North American studies suggest they are one of the most common allergens. If it is not the case in Brazil a reference should be given.

Some wheezy preschool children without asthma may have been categorised as asthma. The shortcomings of the asthma diagnostic criteria should be discussed.

I wonder how vaccine associated seropositivity for hepatitis A and varicella was excluded.

I wonder whether informed consent was taken from children or only from parents/caregiver.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no conflict of interest