Reviewer's report

Title: Response of the airways and autonomic nervous system to acid perfusion of the esophagus in patients with asthma: a laboratory study.

Version: 1 Date: 10 December 2012

Reviewer: Tibor Wittmann

Reviewer's report:

There are several questions to clear up. Concerning the pH monitoring with dual sensors the data obtained on the proximal sensor are lacking. While pathological data at this level may suggest the phenomenon of microaspiration, but this is an other mechanism of the reflux induced asthma.

At the level of the distal sensor for the distinction of normal or abnormal reflux events, in special in asthmatic patients, other criteria than the DeMeester score alone is essential to explore. An increase in the number of reflux events at the level of the distal esophagus is detectable in the reflux induced asthma, while the total score remains normal. (see in: Roka R, Rosztoczy A, Izbeki F, Taybani Z, Kiss I, Lonovics J, Wittmann T.: Prevalence of respiratory symptoms and diseases associated with gastroesophageal reflux disease. Digestion, 71:92-96, 2005.). By this mean the selection of patients remains doubtful, especially in case of 10 patients who had normal pH values but positive GERD symptom score. If all the DeMeester criteria were really normal in these patients, the analysis of a correlation between symptoms and physiological reflux events is mandatory to establish or rule out a hypersensitive esophagus.

The authors discuss the role of mucosal damage in the development of the esophago-bronchial reflex, but they did not carried out upper gi. endoscopy. This fact decline their results.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests