Reviewer's report

Title: Serum interleukin-5 levels are elevated in mild and moderate persistent asthma irrespective of regular inhaled glucocorticoid therapy.

Version: 1 Date: 29 December 2003

Reviewer: Choon-Sik S Park

Reviewer's report:

General
Dr Jose and coworker have done a prospective cross sectional study to reveal the effect of inhaled steroid on serum IL-5 levels and the clinical relevance of those levels in mild and moderate asthma. They concluded that serum IL-5 levels are elevated in mild and moderate persistent asthma compared with those in normal controls and that regular use of inhaled glucocorticoid does not affect the IL-5 levels.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1. In figure 1, It seems better that FEV1 is presented as % predicted values
2. In figure 1, It seems better to add clinical and laboratory parameters of normal controls.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. For the evaluation of effect of inhaled steroid, dosage and duration of inhaling steroid must be an important determinant factor. The authors need to provide the information on duration of inhaled steroid before the study.
2. Regarding the patient group not using inhaled steroid, the authors defined as those whose had not received inhaled steroid "two weeks" prior to recruitment to the study. The history of inhaled steroid should be clarified during the previous period before two weeks in this group. The authors also must provide the reason for the criteria of two weeks. Is there any evidence to support that two week's treatment of inhaled steroid is enough to exert its full effect.
3. Longitudinal study seems to be better to see the therapeutic effects rather than cross-sectional study.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes

Declaration of competing interests: