Author's response to reviews

Title: The Urban Environment and Childhood Asthma (URECA) Birth Cohort Study: Design, Methods, and Study Population

Authors:

Janes E. Gern (gern@medicine.wisc.edu)
Cynthia M. Visness (cvisness@rhoworld.com)
Peter J. Gergen (pgergen@niaid.nih.gov)
Robert A. Wood (rwood@jhmi.edu)
Gordon R. Bloomberg (bloomberg@kids.wustl.edu)
George T. O'Connor (goconnor@bu.edu)
Meyer Kattan (mk2833@columbia.edu)
Hugh A. Sampson (hugh.sampson@mssm.edu)
Frank R. Witter (fwitter@jhmi.edu)
Megan T. Sandel (msandel@bu.edu)
Wayne G. Shreffler (wayne.shreffler@mssm.edu)
Rosalind J. Wright (rerjw@channing.harvard.edu)
Samuel J. Arbes (sarbes@rhoworld.com)
William W. Busse (wwb@medicine.wisc.edu)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer's report

Title: The Urban Environment and Childhood Asthma (URECA) Birth Cohort Study: Design, Methods, and Study Population

Version: 1 Date: 12 March 2009

Reviewer: Peter D Sly

Reviewer's report:
Minor Essential Revisions
1. Please add the algorithm used to determine asthma (p9). This will allow others to use similar criteria and enhance inter-study comparisons.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Response:
Since there is no universally accepted “gold standard” definition for the diagnosis of asthma in early childhood, we will consider several outcome measures on a yearly basis beginning at age 4 years. These will include doctor-diagnosed asthma, to establish comparability with other studies, along with a category for doctor-diagnosed active asthma that includes activity or controller therapy for asthma in the past 12 months. In addition, a third definition for clinical asthma will be developed based solely on activity or treatment in the past 12 months independent of doctor diagnosis. Bronchodilator reversibility (yearly beginning at age 4) and methacholine reactivity (81 month visit) will be analyzed separately as asthma-related outcomes.

This information has been added to the methods section on page 9 para 2.