Reviewer's report

Title: Anti-centromere antibody-seropositive Sjogren’s syndrome differs from conventional subgroup in clinical and pathological study

Version: 2 Date: 1 June 2010

Reviewer: Wan-Fai Ng

Reviewer's report:

The authors have analysed additional ACA-ve data in an attempt to address the comments from the reviewers. While many of the comments have been reasonably addressed, I feel that one of the major comments have not been addressed even though the additional data provided should allow the issue to be investigated.

Minor Essential Revision:

1. One of the key comments is that the observed difference (e.g. normal IgG) could reflect the difference in anti-Ro/La autoantibodies between the ACA+ and ACA-ve group, therefore, additional analysis should be undertaken to compare the levels of IgG between ACA+ve patients and the Ro/La -ve subset of the ACA-ve patients, and if both groups have normal IgG, then it should be included in the discussion that normal IgG may be linked to Ro/La negativity rather than necessarily ACA negativity.

2. Many thanks for providing the length of follow-up of the patient groups. Is there any data to compare the likelihood of developing CREST/Limited SSc between patients with ACA but without primary Sjogren's syndrome to those ACA+ve primary Sjogren’s syndrome? From a clinical perspective, how long should a physician follow-up ACA+ve primary Sjogren's syndrome patients to know that the patients will not evolved into CREST/Limited SSc? (In other words, is 6.6 years of follow-up sufficient to know that these ACA+ve Sjogren's patients will not develop CREST/Limited SSc.

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