Reviewer's report

Title: Pedigree analysis and epidemiological features of idiopathic congenital talipes equinovarus in the United Kingdom: A case-control study

Version: 1 Date: 16 April 2007

Reviewer: fred dietz

Reviewer's report:

General
The manuscript describes a well done edpidemiologic study of clubfoot. It is not a large study. It had relatively poor participationg (42%) of eligible families and 31% of eligible controls. The authors seemed to emphasize statisticially non-significant findings that they think might have a role in clubfoot causation, such as paternal smoking and maternal folic acid use. I think that this causes the manuscript to be mildly misleading to non geneticists who may be persuaded of associations that the authors did not prove.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
I think the authors should Review their abstract, conclusion an discussion and be clear on what is a true finding and whether the "suggestions" of association truly hold. An indepent statistical assessment might help here. P values would help along with odds ratios and CI's. were the appropriate adjustments for multiple tests done?

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
I would enjoy reading the authors explanation of the association of clubfoot with maternal education. Also, explanations of the reasons that their study may have differed from other equally large or larger studies for associations such as parity would be interesting. i really thinkg that disorders of complex inheritance are turning out to be "complex" and the enviornmental contributors are difficult to tease out. Perhaps some general perspective in the discussion would be nice.

What next?: Accept after minor essential 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, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'