Reviewer's report

Title: HLA class II allele polymorphism may influence susceptibility to adult dermatomyositis and polymyositis in a Han Chinese population

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Reviewer: Hector Chinoy

Reviewer's report:

Review of “HLA class II alleles may influence susceptibility to adult dermatomyositis and polymyositis in a Han Chinese population”

Overall, this is a well-written report of HLA class II associations in a small population of Han Chinese myositis subjects and worthy of publication.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?

The question is well-defined. What is already known in the literature about HLA associations in Chinese populations?

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?

Was a “definite” or “probable” diagnosis of myositis made according to Bohan and Peter? The methodology is otherwise well described.

3. Are the data sound?

A limited repertoire of autoantibodies was tested in the study. Therefore, the statement “autoantibodies were more likely present among PM patients” should be rephrased to something like “the tested autoantibodies were more frequent in the PM group”. The data is on a limited number of patients, thus phrases such as “suggesting that patients with this allele are unlikely to develop this lung disorder” should be avoided in the methods. This may be purely down to lack of statistical power.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?

Where relevant, yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

Yes, please correct “DM and PM patients with HLA-RB1*04, HLA-RB1*12”

More should be made of the DRB1*07 association which is also present in Caucasian DM patients, suggesting shared ethno-geographic susceptibility. It is interesting that this allele is present on a different haplotype to that described in
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Yes

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Not stated

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   Yes

I would therefore suggest the above revisions before the manuscript is suitable for publications

**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'