Reviewer's report

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

Version: 4 Date: 22 April 2014

Reviewer: Brian Tait

Reviewer's report:

The changes introduced into the manuscript have improved the overall presentation. There are some further minor essential revisions however which I recommend should be included. They are:

1. In the abstract and again in the second para of the Background reference is made to “…polymorphisms in 91 adult DM and PM patients…….”. It would be more informative to state “…polymorphisms in 71 adult DM and 20 PM patients….”

2. Page 7 line 5. Since reference is made to the fact that DQA1*0104 is increased in DM it would be preferable to replace “..and the risk of myositis.” With “…and the risk of DM.”

3. First line of page 10. The 8.1 haplotype as defined includes HLA-B8 and is a Caucasian haplotype. I would be surprised if it has been seen at all in the population studied. However DRB1*03-DQA1*05-DQB1*02 does occur on other extended haplotypes and therefore it would be more accurate to state “DRB1*03-DQA1*05-DQB1*02 is not a major haplotype in our cohort…”

4. Page 10 last line reference should be “Chinoy and colleagues”

5. Page 11 first line ‘sizes” should be “size”

6. 3rd last line of conclusions. Should be HLA-DRB1*04 and HLA-DRB1*12 (D has been left out)

Essential Revisions

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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