Reviewer's report

Title: Renal itch in hemodialysis patients

Version: 1 Date: 30 January 2005

Reviewer: Elke Weisshaar

Reviewer's report:

General

The paper by Akhyani et al. describes "Renal itch in hemodialysis patients". This study investigated 167 patients on HD, 70 patients had pruritus. Both groups are compared concerning clinical characteristics and laboratory values.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. Atopy is not only ruled out or diagnosed by asking for atopic dermatitis, allergic rhinitis or asthma. Of course for dermatologists atopic dermatitis is a clinical diagnosis. For a study in patients with no clinically diagnosed atopic dermatitis, the known clinical score systems should be used such as the criteria by Hanifin and Rajka (Acta Derm Venereol 1980) or by Diepgen TL (Acta Derm Venereol 1989).

2. No data is presented about the sufficiency of dialysis e.g. kt/V values, material of membranes used for dialysis.

3. Most of the results presented in this paper are not really new. Most of the information presented in this manuscript is already known except of especially the fact that we have so far not obtained any information about renal itch in Iran. This is original and new. The authors should point out what is really new and they should discuss it according to the current literature. Like stated in "4.", the literature section in incomplete. Altogether, the discussion section should focus on the latest and most relevant papers in this field. It should point out what results are really new and original.

4. It would be very important to include and discuss the results of the paper Yosipovitch G: A questionnaire for the assessment of pruritus: validation in uremic patients. Acta Derm Venereol 2001; 81: 108-111.


6. Table 1: it would be beneficial for the reader to include "normal values".

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

On page 3 place and country of the hospitals enrolled in the study are not stated.
Page 4: there is an error: .... mild (only one leg)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.