Reviewer’s report

Title: An Italian prospective multicenter survey on patients suspected of having non-celiac gluten sensitivity

Version: 1 Date: 10 March 2014

Reviewer: Geoffrey Holmes

Reviewer’s report:

In this Italian prospective study carried out over a period of one year, 486 patients with suspected non-celiac gluten sensitivity (NCGS) were identified from 38 centres (34 adult and 4 pediatric) with the aim of clarifying clinical features and establishing prevalence relative to celiac disease. Some interesting information has emerged with regard to symptoms, associated conditions, reactions to gluten and prevalence. A questionnaire was used to record the required information.

Major revisions

1. Three forms of sensitivity to gluten have been proposed – celiac disease, wheat allergy and gluten sensitivity (ref 11 in the paper). NCGS is regarded as a reaction to gluten in which allergic and autoimmune mechanisms have been excluded. Serological tests for celiac disease are negative although antigliadin antibodies may be present. The duodenal mucosa is grossly normal. In this study 22% had IgE- mediated allergy so strictly speaking should not be included under the term NCGS as presently understood. In the Discussion page 13 these are regarded as a subgroup of NCGS. On page 14 of the Discussion the authors write that there are no biomarkers for NCGS, apart from AGA but include IgE positive patients in this group. The authors ought to make clearer what they mean by NCGS and how this differs from wheat allergy. The problem at the moment is the nomenclature for these conditions but as long as the authors define what they are talking about the difficulty should be solved.

2. Duodenal biopsy was only performed in 302 (62%) of cases so why assume that some of these patients did not have celiac disease? This deserves a comment.

3. How was IBS defined?

4. On page 12 of the Discussion the authors admit great limitations of their study. These should be stated in detail and how these impact on the conclusions drawn. The strengths of the study are worth emphasising

Minor essential

1. Peer on page 6 should be pear

2. Familiarity on page 8 should be – family history of CD

3. On page 9 not well being should be lack of well being – same applies to Fig 2.
Discretionary
1. Add to the summary that only a proportion of cases had a biopsy
2. In the Background section it might be better the write - in recent years….world wide report…..spelt causes.

**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