Reviewer's report

Title: Asymptomatic neural tumor of the heart

Version: 1 Date: 2 November 2006

Reviewer: SANJAY PAI

Reviewer's report:

General

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

The case report on atrial schwannomas is potentially interesting as the neoplasm is indeed rare. However, it requires modifications before being seriously considered.

1. The title is unclear: it should state schwannoma or neurilemmoma, not neural tumour [which is not specific].

2. Why did the patient have haematemesis? This has not been addressed at all.

3. There is no clarity about the diagnosis. The paper states that it is a schwannoma, yet has been called "a low grade neural tumour". The term low grade is usually reserved for malignant tumours, not for benign tumours [which is what a schwannoma is]. Also, schwannomas rarely show mitoses. This one is supposed to have shown a "low mitotic index". How many mitotic figures were seen? Are we sure this was not a neurogenic sarcoma? Also, the immunohistochemistry can only suggest neurogenic origin, but not the grade of the tumour [as the statement in this paper appears to indicate]. What other immunostains were performed?

4. The statement, in the discussion, that "diagnosis can only be made by histopathologic examination, frozen section is not adequate..." suggests that frozen section is not histological examination ....which it is!!

5. The review of literature is incomplete. How many cases have been described? One of the papers states there were 8 cases described up 2001, but I suspect that there are more. Sirlak et al, Bizzari et al, Stolf et al and others have written case reports on the same topic.

6. Did the patient have von Recklinghausen's disease?

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

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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