Reviewer’s report

Title: Use of anabolic-androgenic steroids masking the diagnosis of pleural tuberculosis: a case report.

Version: 3 Date: 19 July 2008

Reviewer: Ming-Shyan Huang

I am familiar with the literature and believe that this case meets one of the 9 criteria for evaluation in the journal: None

Has the case been reported coherently?: No

Is the case report authentic?: Yes

Is this case worth reporting?: No

Is the case report persuasive?: No

Does the case report have explanatory value?: No

Does the case report have diagnostic value?: No

Will the case report make a difference to clinical practice?: No

Is the anonymity of the patient protected?: Yes

Comments to authors:

This is a case report. The title is "use of anabolic-androgenic steroids masking the diagnosis of pleural tuberculosis". This patient was received the anabolic-androgenic steroid injecting treatment two weeks before that episode. Authors had checked adenosine deaminase (ADA) levels on pleural effusion and got low ADA levels. However, ADA and skin test are necessary for the maturation and differentiation of lymphoid cells, has been reported in a number of studies to be elevated in these fluids when tuberculosis involves these sites. The utility of the routine measurement of ADA has not been determined and this test is not generally available. ADA and/or skin test may reveal false negative results, especially, during patient received steroid treatment. The diagnosis of pleural tuberculosis requires thoracentesis and, usually, pleural biopsy.

1. Why did not show the initial pleural effusion cell and differential counts datae? Such as the differential cell counts: ?% mononuclear cells and ?% neutrophils.

2. Why did not perform the pleural biopsy? As we know the pleuroscopy-guided biopsies increase the yield in pleural sampling.
3. The using steroid masking the diagnosis of tuberculosis is not uncommon.
4. This case is not worth reporting.

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