Reviewer's report

Title: Renal cancer associated with recurrent spontaneous pneumothorax in Birt-Hogg-Dube syndrome: a case report

Version: 1 Date: 5 January 2009

Reviewer: Joe O'Sullivan

Which of the following best describes what type of case report this is?: Other

If other, please specify:

The report describes a typical case of a rare but previously well described syndrome.

Has the case been reported coherently?: Yes

Is the case report authentic?: Yes

Is the case report ethical?: Yes

Is there any missing information that you think must be added before publication?: Yes

Is this case worth reporting?: Yes

Is the case report persuasive?: Yes

Does the case report have explanatory value?: Yes

Does the case report have diagnostic value?: Yes

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

Is the anonymity of the patient protected?: Yes

Comments to authors:

This case report details the case of a 60 year old female with a history of cystic lung disease and recurrent pneumothorax. Papular lesions were noted on her forehead and a diagnosis of Birt-Hogg-Dubé syndrome was made. As a result an abdominal CT was performed and a lesion was identified on the lower pole of the left kidney. A partial nephrectomy was performed revealing a hybrid oncocytoma with 'elements' of chromophobe RCC. The authors advise that this syndrome be considered in cases of recurrent pneumothorax as affected individuals should be
screened for renal tumours.

General comments.
The report is well written and describes a rare but interesting syndrome. My only real criticism regards the lack of detail in the report about the renal tumour. As the take home message of the report would appear to be the potential for asymptomatic renal tumours in these patients, I believe further clarity is needed. The potentially lethal element of this tumour is the Renal Carcinoma and not the oncocytoma. I would suggest getting some more detail from the pathologist involved. If there is indeed a confirmed invasive malignancy, the conclusion of the paper would be greatly strengthened by highlighting this fact. Details required: size of invasive malignancy, margin status, grade of renal tumour, pathological stage.

The genetics of the syndrome are very well described in the paper.

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests