Reviewer’s report

Title: The key to managing the risk of cancer in Cowden Syndrome: a case report

Version: 8 Date: 27 January 2012

Reviewer: Robert Pilarski

Which of the following following best describes what type of case report this is?: None

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?: No

Is this case worth reporting?: No

Is the case report persuasive?: No

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?: Yes

Is the anonymity of the patient protected?: Yes

Comments to authors:

This is a straightforward case report of a patient with many of the typical features of Cowden syndrome, meeting clinical diagnostic criteria. There is nothing new or unusual about the case. As such, it is not noteworthy for publication other than as a reminder to clinicians that this syndrome should be kept in mind when managing patients with the associated clinical features. This is not an irrelevant reason to publish a report, but it is not one of the listed reasons for this journal.

The review of the literature is greatly weakened by the use of older/outdated references and the failure to use primary references. Most of the papers cited to support facts and figures about CS are themselves simply other case reports which review the literature (in turn, citing other non-primary sources). The statement that there are more than 200 cases is based on a 2005 paper. There
have been nearly 400 cases reported in two publications in the past year. A number of clinical statements are outdated and incorrect, including that colon polyps occur in 35-40% of patients (it is currently felt to be at least 80% of patients with PTEN mutations), that cancer is not increased (see Heald, et al., Dec 2010), and that macrocephaly is seen in 10% of cases (currently felt to be 80% or higher).

The suggestion that “Environmental, genetic and nutrition factors may protect against Tunisian patients with CS against breast cancer”, as stated in the first paragraph of the discussion, is entirely unjustified based on only three female cases in Tunisia, the oldest of whom could only be 45 yo (per the age range of the Tunisian cases in their discussion).

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.