Reviewer’s report

Title: Apolipoprotein L1, Income and Early Kidney Damage

Version: 1 Date: 7 November 2014

Reviewer: Sahar Bayat

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The paper evaluates whether genetic factors, environmental factors and their interaction are associated with markers of renal dysfunction among a cohort of predominantly low income African Americans. This study is of interest, however I have some major questions and remarks:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1 - Is the study population (462 participants) representative of all African Americans? As the authors mention the study population is largely comprised of young low income individuals. However the conclusion of the manuscript is generalized to all African Americans. The authors need to give some indication of whether their results are generalizable.

2 - To evaluate for any significant differences in participants characteristics ANOVA was used for categorical variables. How the categorical variables were handled in ANOVA analysis?

3 - How were missing data handled in the analysis?

4 – Despite a low event rate for early kidney damage (eGFR < 75: 51 events, eGFR < 60: 19 events, elevated ACR: 21 events) the analyses have been adjusted for several covariates: age, sex, Percent European ancestry, APOL1, Income category and interaction. The authors should consider and discuss the limits of these analyses.

- Minor Essential Revisions

5 - It is important to detail the amount of missing data by APOL1 and Income Status in table 1.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

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