

## Reviewer's report

**Title:** Progression and Regression of Incident Cervical HPV 6, 11, 16 and 18 Infections In Young Women

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 15 May 2007

**Reviewer:** Johannes Berkhof

### Reviewer's report:

General

The paper is well written and statistics are sound.

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

\* The authors state that 1 third of the CIN2/3 lesions are not correlated with the incident HPV type. As a reader, it is difficult to immediately believe that these CIN lesions were actually caused by another HPV type and not missed by the type-specific PCR.

Do the authors have information about the sensitivity of the test?

Within HPV type-positive CIN2/3, how often were HPV-type negative smears observed in between two positive smears? This gives at least some idea about the test sensitivity.

The study would be stronger if HPV type-specific information (for all 14/15 high-risk types) had been available. Do the authors have any HPV information on the biopsy specimen (in addition to HPV16,18,6,11 testing results)? It would be nice to report HPV-positivity on a cocktail HPV test. If no additional HPV information is available, the authors should discuss test sensitivity (at least to assure the reader).

\* The information about low-risk types HPV6 and HPV11 is of very limited value. In the discussion, the authors state that "The presence of HPV-6 in CIN-2/3 lesions has not been examined in prior international reviews and represents an area for further research".

I do not agree. The NEJM paper by Munoz et al. (2003) gives the relative importance of HPV types in cervical cancer. HPV6 is somewhere at the bottom of the list.

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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)

Page 8. In the Statistical Analysis section, the authors state "Once an endpoint of progression to CIN was observed, a woman was no longer at risk for contributing towards the cumulative rate of regression, and vice versa".

I do not understand this phrase.

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.