

Reviewer's report

Title: Heterogeneous Dermatitis Complaints after Change in Drinking Water Treatment: Case Report

Version: 1 **Date:** 3 May 2006

Reviewer: Manolis Kogevinas

Reviewer's report:

General

This is a case report on dermatitis complaints and use of water. The issue is important since use of chloramine is increasing in recent years. The main problem of the study is precisely that it is a case-report and an association of symptoms with chloramine cannot be proved with this design. The authors are aware of this and have expressed their conclusions in a cautious way recommending further studies.

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

The abstract is very long compared to the main text. For a case report, the abstract could have been limited to a couple of sentences.

The authors do not give any details on how many subjects were asked to complete the questionnaire, or how many subjects called the department.

Case reports based on people raising complaints have a high risk of reporting bias. This is inherent in this type studies and makes interpretation difficult. Probably it would be advisable to add an explicit statement in the conclusions that this type of study design cannot prove an association. This would help readers not to over interpret findings.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable