Author's response to reviews

Title: Lack of evidence for a genetic association between FGF20 and Parkinson's disease in Finnish and Greek patients

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear editor,

We have taken into account the comments of the two reviewers in order to improve the manuscript entitled “FGF20 is not genetically associated with Parkinson’s disease in Finnish and Greek patients”, by Clarimon et al.

We agree with the Editorial team that we could change the manuscript’s title into. Thus, we have changed it to: “Lack of evidence for a genetic association between FGF20 and Parkinson's disease in Finnish and Greek patients”.

Accordingly we have written a revised version of the manuscript in which we have included some of the reviewer’s comments. We also answer each of the points raised by the two reviewers.

Reviewer #1:

1. We completely agree with the reviewer that some of the individuals included in the analysis had an age at onset that should not be defined as “late onset”. There are 11 Finnish samples and 3 Greek patients with an onset before 45 years old. We have re-calculated all the analysis without these individuals and the results remain exactly the same, without any significant difference between patient genotype and haplotype frequencies.

Since none of these individuals had a family history of PD, nor an age of onset before 30 years old (which could suggest a clear genetic implication), and mutations in Mendelian genes for PD are relatively infrequent, we have decided to leave the same data in the manuscript. However, we have changed the term “sporadic late-onset PD patients” to the more appropriate form “sporadic PD patients”.

2. The reviewer suggests that a possible explanation for the lack of replication between our study and the one performed by Walt and colleagues (Am J Hum Genet 2004, 74:1121-1127) could be the result of using different epidemiological approaches. We believe that the association reported by Walt et al. should be strong enough to be consistent when other genetic epidemiology methods are employed. Since the reported p values are in the order of 1*10E-3, one could expect a similar pattern of association, independently of the method utilized. Therefore, it seems very improbable that the lack of replication is due to the use of another methodology.

3. We acknowledge reviewer’s comments regarding some inaccuracies of the manuscript. We have addressed these mistakes in the new version.

Reviewer #2

1. We have carefully edited the manuscript in order to correct some minor mistakes that were present in the first version.