Reviewer’s report

Title: A novel biomarker TERTmRNA is applicable for an early detection of hepatoma

Version: 1 Date: 24 September 2009

Reviewer: Hans Spangenberg

Reviewer’s report:

The paper entitled „A novel biomarker TERTmRNA is applicable for an early detection of hepatoma” by Miural. describes the detection of TERTmRNA in the serum of patients with HCC. The paper is well written, the methods used are state of the art. Even though the results of the study are quite intriguing, some points should be addressed prior to publication.

1. The study population is not well described. A table with the characteristics should be added. (Figure 1 with should include the characteristics) could not be found.

2. The control population is not well chosen, since most HCC patients are male, however in this paper the majority of control patients is female.

3. For better statistical comparison more patients with liver cirrhosis with different child classification should be evaluated.

4. Longitudinal analysis of TERTmRNA should be done to analyse the predictive value of this marker to detect HCCs.

5. Was the diagnosis of HCC according to AASLD guidelines, this should be stated in M and M.

6. The recurrence of HCC after TACE, was there any correlation of TERT with imaging (Ultrasound, CT, MR)?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.