Reviewer's report

Title: hTERT, MYC and TP53 deregulation in gastric preneoplastic lesions

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Reviewer: Reginald V. Lord

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Review of “hTERT, MYC and TP53 deregulation in gastric preneoplastic lesions” by Tanielly Cristina Raiol Silva et al. for BMC Gastroenterology

This manuscript reports on a straightforward study by a group who have investigated these genes in detail in previous studies, including in non-human primate gastric cancer models. The study is well conducted, the results and analysis are very clear, and the paper is well written. The overall importance of the findings is only moderately high but the difference in positive immunoreactivity, in particular, in IM compared to gastritis, may be clinically valuable.

My only major suggestion is that the importance of the findings has been overstated. In the Discussion the authors claim that “Therefore, taking our results together with those from the literature, we hypothesize that patients presenting intestinal metaplasia with immunoreactivity of hTERT, MYC, and p53 – alterations common described in gastric neoplasia – must be included in a risk group for gastric cancer and should be monitored at regular intervals with endoscopy and histopathology analysis.” This implies that these three markers are valid biomarkers of progression to cancer in patients with IM. The data have not shown this and references to others’ work to support this statement is also lacking. I believe this statement should be modified to indicate that the proteins should be investigated further for roles as markers of disease progression, for which a much larger patient cohort(s) will be needed, ideally with sequential biopsies from the same individuals.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'