Reviewer's report

Title: Characterization and prognosis of patients with hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) in the non-cirrhotic liver

Version: 1 Date: 14 March 2014

Reviewer: Jan Best

Reviewer's report:

Schütte and coworkers performed a retrospective analysis comparing clinical and demographic characteristics between HCC patients in a background of either cirrhotic or non-cirrhotic liver.

Major compulsory revisions:

1) Relevant findings of this manuscript have to be discussed more thoroughly in the context of recent literature, e.g. the progression of NAFLD to HCC in absence of cirrhosis has previously been characterized by Ertle et al..

2) Table 5 represents treatment modalities for patients in NCL. A related table for patients in CL background should be supplemented additionally. Maybe this will give rise to interesting differences in applied treatment options between the two HCC subpopulations.

3) Please provide figure legends for fig. 5 and 6

Minor Essential revisions:

1) Patient cohort determined to suffer from NAFLD has been selected by exclusion of other causes in sonographically proven steatotic patients. It would be desirable to have a more differential figure of the proportion of NAFLD patients suffering simultaneously from diabetes, obesity, or more rare risk factors such as celiac disease and additionally laboratory parameters, such as transaminases, alkaline phosphatase,....

Discretionary Revisions:

Page 13, line 5: spelling mistake

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
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