Reviewer's report

Title: Treatment with Pirfenidone for two years decreases fibrosis, cytokine levels and enhances CB2 expression in patients with chronic hepatitis C: open-label clinical trial

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Reviewer: lawrence serfaty

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Contreras et al have investigated the efficacy of Pirfenidone in the treatment of chronic hepatitis C. This molecule used in the treatment of pulmonary fibrosis was given for 2 years in 34 HCV patients with different stage of disease severity. Control liver biopsy showed a significant improvement of steatosis, fibrosis and inflammation. Some cirrhotic patients improved their Child score. Molecular analysis showed modulation of CB receptors expression.

Authors published similar results in a previous small pilot study (Gut 2006). Accordingly, I don’t understand why they did not perform a randomized controlled study rather than a second pilot study.

Moreover, in the era of DAAs, the relevance of this antifibrotic treatment is likely out of relevance. I have also major concerns with the safety of this molecule.

Results should be presented in intend to treat (6 patients excluded of the efficacy analysis)

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests: I have no competing interest with this paper.