Author's response to reviews

Title: Association between ERCC1 and TS expression levels and disease free survival in colorectal cancer patients in response to oxaliplatin and fluorouracil (5-FU) adjuvant chemotherapy

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr. Tonilynn Manibo,

Manuscript ID 7583331891188427 entitled "Association between ERCC1 and TS mRNA levels and disease free survival in colorectal cancer patients receiving oxaliplatin and fluorouracil (5-FU) adjuvant chemotherapy" has been revised. The authors would like to thank Reviewers for their careful review of our manuscript and providing us with their comments and suggestion to improve the quality of the manuscript. The point-by-point responses to these comments are listed below. We would like to re-submit this revised manuscript to “bmc gastroenterology” and hope it is acceptable for publication in the journal. Please do not hesitate to contact us with additional questions.

Our response to Editorial Board Comments:

Comments from the Section Editor:

Comment 1: In their multivariate model, some of the variables are not dichotomous (such as tumor stage, LN stage). It is not clear how they were included in the multivariate model as only one hazard ratio is provided. This suggests they are using it as a continuous variable which is not appropriate. I would suggest creation of dummy variables and appropriate modeling of these parameters as categorical variables.

Response: Thanks for your kind suggestion. We were so sorry for my misunderstanding of the statistical analysis before. According to your suggestion, dummy variables were considered for all the categorical variables in the analysis. Meanwhile, the chemotherapy regimens were used as a stratification variable in all the analyses.

Comment 2: Second, I would suggest a more trimmed model for multivariate analyses. There are few outcomes and forcing multiple variables, most of which are not significant into the model, results in over fitting. Consider using stepwise regression.

Response: Thanks for your careful review. The backward stepwise method was used in the multivariate analysis base on the likelihood ratio statistics. Only the tumor stage was remained in the last step of cox model analysis.

Additional comments from Executive Editor:

Comment 1: In your manuscript you indicated that this was a retrospective study. However, later on you mention randomization. Also, you follow-up the patients, which would suggest prospective character of your study. Please clarify your study design. Additionally, in your study, patients were treated with four types of chemotherapy regimens. Could you clarify if all of these four treatments were standard care in your hospital at the time, and please tell us how you decided which patient would get which
therapy.

Response: Thanks for you kind suggestion. We were sorry for misunderstanding the definitions of retrospective and prospective. We have revised the manuscript according to your suggestion. In addition, we clarified these four treatments were standard care in the hospital of China. In this study, all the chemotherapy regimens were performed by a trained nurse. The selection of chemotherapy regimens for each patient was according to the recommendation of an experienced expert.

Comment 2: Please include all authors email addresses on the title page of your manuscript

Response: Thanks for you kind suggestion. We have revised the manuscript according to your suggestion.

We appreciate very much for your time in editing our manuscript and the referees for their valuable suggestions and comments. We are looking forward to hearing from your final decision when it is made.

With kindest regards,
Sheng Li