Reviewer's report

Title: Jejunal microvilli atrophy and reduced nutrient transport in rats with advanced liver cirrhosis: improvement by Insulin-like Growth Factor I (IGF-I)

Version: 1 Date: 12 February 2004

Reviewer: Bruce B Scharschmidt

Reviewer's report:

General: This study represents part of a continuing series of studies examining the effect of IGF-I in a rodent model of CCl4-induced cirrhosis. The principal finding is that jejunal vesicles from cirrhotic rats exhibit diminished jejunal vesicle update (both velocity and capacity) of galactose and several amino acids, which is largely reversed by IGF-I administration. These findings indicate the presence of an intrinsic abnormality in mucosal jejunal transport correctable by IGF-I. The results do not clarify the relationship of the gut and liver abnormalities, nor do they provide mechanistic information about the gut abnormalities (e.g., decreased number of transporters vs diminished function).

-----------------------------------------------------------------

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

-----------------------------------------------------------------

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct) The last sentence of the Abstract in background should be moved to methods.

-----------------------------------------------------------------

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore). It would be informative to the reader if the authors would comment on the likely basis for the observed abnormalities (e.g., decreased number of transporters vs diminished transporter function).

-----------------------------------------------------------------

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

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

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

As I indicated in email response to the original request to review this paper, I am an employee of Chiron Corporation, which provided the IGF-I used in these studies to the authors. Chiron has discontinued development of IGF-I and I cannot forsee how either Chiron or I might benefit financially, from the publication or non-publication of this paper.