Reviewer's report

Title: Hepatocyte growth factor (HGF) in fecal samples: rapid detection by surface plasmon resonance

Version: 1 Date: 20 August 2004

Reviewer: Wen W.G. Jiang

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General
The study describes the development of a new method, surface plasmon resonance, to detect human hepatocyte growth factor in clinical samples. It is interesting in two folds, first, it provides a new tool in analysing HGF; second, it appears to be reliable applicable to difficult samples, i.e. fecal samples which are notoriously difficult to study. From this point of view, the manuscript should be of good interest to those who work in this area.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
My major concern is the size of the sample numbers in each of the three groups. For example, there are only 9 in control and 6 in cancer group. There was no indication of logics and selection criteria in choosing the patients. Clinical description is important in both gastroenteritis and cancer groups, as it has important bearings to the interpretation of the findings.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Figures and legends are generally well organised and easy to understand.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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:
None