Author's response to reviews

Title: Imbalance of tissue inhibitors of metalloproteinases (TIMP) - 1 and - 4 serum levels, in patients with inflammatory bowel disease

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Reviewer 2

Dear Dr Day,

1. We have removed numeric details from the abstract as requested.
2. The mean ± SEM ratio between TIMP-1 and TIMP-4 levels was 0.25 ±0.01 ng/mL (median: 0.24, range: 0.03-0.47) in UC patients, 0.28 ± 0.02 ng/mL (median: 0.25, range: 0.005-0.66) in CD patients and 0.22 ± 0.03 ng/mL (median: 0.22, range: 0.003-1.00) in HC. CD patients (p=0.036) but not UC (p=0.174) had significantly higher TIMP1 / TIMP-4 ratio compared to HC group. No significant difference was found between UC and CD patients (p=0.247). Also, the aforementioned ratio was not different between patients with active IBD as compared with patients with inactive disease (p=0.528). This paragraph has been added to the results.
3. MMP-2 activity in IBD patients has been shown to be rather excessive and it could be held accountable for TIMP-4 consumption which in turn could result in lower TIMP-4 levels. This phrase has been added in the text (page 11, lines 21-23).
5. As stated in the conclusions, further studies are needed to clarify the role of TIMPs, as well as the potential use of TIMPs determination for diagnostic purposes.
6. We agree that both plasma and serum TIMP determination reflect circulating levels of TIMPs. On the other hand, there is a difference between plasma and serum TIMP levels. In general, handling of serum samples is more practical (see also Mannello F. Serum or plasma samples? The "Cinderella" role of blood

Thank you for your comments

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