Reviewer's report

Title: Serum procalcitonin and CRP levels in non-alcoholic fatty liver disease

Version: 1 Date: 29 August 2008

Reviewer: Claudio Tiribelli

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Major Compulsory Revisions

The Ms reports the comparison of the serum level of 2 acute phase reactive proteins (CRP and PCT) in a series of subjects with histologically proven fatty liver equally distributed between NALFL and NASH compared with controls. Data show no difference either in the CRP or PTC level while fatty liver collectively showed an higher level of CRP. The data are of little interests since they are merely observational with no hints on the reason(s) to explain what observed. In addition to this severe and structural problem, other points need to be addressed:

1. The number of patients enrolled was 50 but no information is given on the total number of potentially eligible subjects observed in the 7 year period. This is important to avoid possible selection bias.

2. Why in Tables the total number of patients is 47 while the number of 50 is reported in the text? Where the missing 3 are left and why?

3. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the 47 patients but not of the 50 controls. This needs to be added to allow comparison.

4. The meaning of the correlation reported in Table 3 and at page 5 is of limited meaning, at best. I suggest either removal or a more detailed analysis performed by a trained biostatistician.

5. The discussion is by far too long and does not address and discuss what found

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

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

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.