Reviewer's report

Title: Clinical Research on Liver Reserve Function by 13C-Phenylalanine Breath Test in Elderly

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Reviewer: Atsushi Nakajima

Reviewer's report:

This article demonstrated the usefulness of the 13C-Phenylalanine Breath Test which is a safe test and easy to prepare, perform and analyses in elderly. I recommend publication subject to some revisions.

Discretionary revisions

1. (Table 1) The authors should add a "(mean+SD)".
2. (Table 2 and 4) It was written as "serum direct total bilirubin" in a Note. But I suspected that "total" was not needed.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the title and abstract, the author should clarify that the patient group was comprised of HBV patients.
2. (Page 6 line 20) The author had better not mention the relation between the severity of liver cirrhosis based on the Child-Pugh score and the values of ALB, TBIL and PT, because the Child-Pugh classification is comprised of these parameter.
3. (3rd and 4th paragraphs of the Result) It is unclear what the values of "the %13C dose h-1 at 20 min and %13C dose h-1 at 30 min combined with the cumulative excretion at 60 min and 120 min" mean and why this values were more important than the other values. This point should be made clear and Table 3 should be improved.
4. (3rd paragraphs of the Result) The author should clarify the reason of the sentence "Cumulative measurements were also investigated and offered no benefit over single measurements at 60 min."
5. (4th paragraph of the discussion) Data and explanation are insufficient to propose the content of 4th paragraph of discussion. If
the authors propose it, the author should classify the liver reserve function and should show the data about the precision of the PheBT for it.

6. (page 10 line 1-3) The author should add references about this sentence.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.