Reviewer’s report

Title: Lack of association between Fas -670A/G polymorphism and risk of cervical cancer: an update by meta-analysis based on 3953 subjects

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Reviewer: Sebastien Viatte

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BMC Medical Genetics


1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Yes

3. Are the data sound? Yes

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Yes

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes, to the best of my knowledge.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes

9. Is the writing acceptable? The writing would require some editing before publication.
Major Compulsory Revisions:
None.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1) The analysis in “White” (as defined by the authors) is presented as a meta-analysis in this particular subgroup in the abstract and main text body, but is not, since there is only one study considered “for analysis”. Therefore, no meta-analysis could be performed in “White”. This point should be made clearer in the abstract and manuscript.

2) No references to studies on the role of Fas polymorphisms in cervical cancer are mentioned in the introduction. Though references are provided later in the manuscript and are the subject of the meta-analysis performed by the authors, the subject should be better referenced in the introduction.

3) Extensive language editing will be eventually required at some places for the reader to better understand the authors. As an example, the beginning of the “Conclusions” (“Although previous meta-analysis maybe involve some parts of the relationship between Fas -670A/G polymorphism and cervical cancer risk, its eligible studies are not quite comprehensive.”) is not clear and requires editing. Do the authors refer to a previously published meta-analysis? If yes, why is it not mentioned in the introduction and why are the references not cited after the above-mentioned statement?

4) Conclusions: “When stratifying for race, significant association was detected in neither Asian populations nor African populations, suggesting there was no difference in genetic background and the environment they live in.” This statement seems to be too broad. The genetic distance between different ethnicities considered together by the authors for analysis could be substantial. It is not excluded that true effects are present in one specific sub-population, but undetected due to lack of statistical power (as they mention it later in the same chapter), or diluted / cancelled out by population stratification issues when different study populations are grouped together for analysis.

5) Ref. 25 is from “J. Exp. Med.” not “Exp. Med.”

Discretionary Revisions:

1) Abstract: All results as presented in the main results table 2 are included in the abstract. The authors might consider shortening the abstract.

2) Author might consider replacing the term “race” by “ethnicities”; “human race” is unclearly and controversially defined in biology.

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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.