Reviewer's report

Title: Inhibition of metastasis, angiogenesis, and tumor growth by Chinese herbal cocktail Tien-Hsien Liquid

Version: 1 Date: 9 January 2010

Reviewer: Chendil Damodaran

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The manuscript focuses on the anticancer activity of THL and the results suggest THL exerts potent anti-migration, invasion and anti cancer activity in preclinical models. Although, the study seems to be interesting, there are lot of concerns weaken the proposal significantly.

1. Lack of mechanism whether the agent inhibits its anticancer activity of through HIF-a, if so, there is not enough results to support the authors claim. Studies such as whether inhibition of HIF-##revert the anticancer activity was not demonstrated.

2. The authors stated that THL “inhibitory effect of THL on the migration of these cancer cells is not due to the cytotoxic effect, because the viability of these cancer cells was barely affected by THL, in the concentration range tested: (page 12), if so, how this agent induces apoptosis in xenograft models (Figure 8F)?

3. Lack of mechanism of action of the compound significant dampens the reviewer’s enthusiasm.

4. Figure-1; Rationale for selection of cell lines are missing. Similar concentration of THL could be used throughout the manuscript. Results should have been discussed in detail, rather describing in one line.

5. Figure-2A, 2B, 2c ; not visible.

6. Figure 2D; down regulation of total levels of Akt suggest the compound might be toxic: b-action seems to be not equally loaded so densitometer results are required. So inclusion of normal cell lines may strengthen the manuscript.

7. Figure-3: The concentration of the agent, duration and concentration of treatment is missing. It is not clear whether any statistical difference were seen, because of morphological and pathological results there is not much difference between groups. Please include higher magnification of Figure 3c.

8. Once again figure 4C,D E ; not visible. How these results were normalized with control? What controls were used?

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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:

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