Yoon et colleagues investigated the association between variable number tandem repeats (VNTRs) in intronic regions of hTERT and increased risk of developing prostate cancer in a case-control study with individuals recruited from five different city hospitals in Korea. They report on three novel minisatellite alleles in the hTERT-VNTR 2-2nd. They detect a five-fold odds ratio of association for rare alleles versus common alleles with rare allele rate of 1.22% in cases in 0.24% in controls.

Finally, they assessed the transcriptional levels of a TERT promoter-driven reporter gene in the presence of VNTRs with a varying number of repeats in prostate cancer cell lines.

Major Compulsory Revisions
What is the effect of testosterone or estrogen cell treatment on hTERT promoter expression?

The authors should consider the evaluation telomere length and assess their associations with respect to the common and the rare alleles. What is the expected relation between hTERT expression and telomere length?

WHO classification system needs to be used for the characterization of the prostate cancer cases.

The study results are limited in clinical applicability due to the very low rate of associated alleles and warrant external validation. The authors should address these points in the discussion and tone down the sentence about usability as diagnostic biomarker of increased risk for prostate cancer and cancer progression.

Minor Essential Revisions
Table 2 does not seem to add anything to the information included in Table 1.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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.