Reviewer’s report

Title: Prognostic significance of lymphangiogenesis in laryngeal carcinoma patients

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Reviewer: Reda Saad

Reviewer’s report:


In this article, the authors investigate the prognostic significance of D2-40/podoplanin as a marker for lymphangiogenesis. In general, the article is well-written, except for small spelling and grammatical mistakes. I have a few major comments about the article:

1. The abstract, particularly the results section, is confusing and should be more informative and simple. For example: the authors found a significant prognostic value for lymphatic vessel density in all group (HNSCC), but when they divided them into laryngeal versus pharyngeal, they found that the statistical significance is present only in laryngeal group. Mentioning HNSCC group gives the reader the false impression that it is significant in both groups (laryngeal and pharyngeal). The question, what is the purpose of mentioning HNSCC group? Please delete and focus on both groups (not the total).

2. The sentence: The lymphangiogenic process correlated with aggressive tumor features ...etc. sites. This is a conclusion, not a result. The authors should state their findings regarding laryngeal and pharyngeal carcinoma without any conclusion remarks. Also, please try to add some statistical data (like P value) to show the reader how much it is significant.

3. In the results section, there is no detailed statistical results. The authors should include a new table to include their statistical results of PLD, ILD (or global) in relation to other prognostic parameters (tumor size, LN status, lymphovascular invasion, etc). The table should include the raw statistical value (for example r= etc, if they used correlation and adding the P value). The authors can add 3 categories: Total group of HNSCC, laryngeal group and pharyngeal group versus global lymphatic density (or ILD and PLD).

4. The authors measure lymphovascular invasion using D2-40. Are all the lymphovascular invasion measured outside or inside the tumor? Some studies have suggested that LVI outside the tumor is more significant than just inside the tumor. Please make this clear in your article (where you measured LVI in this study). Also, are there any correlation between LVI using D2-40 and other prognostic parameters, including survival or not? Please include.

5. The authors reported (Page 9): Remarkable a very interesting ... in the pharyngeal subgroup. Confusing statement: 47 HNSCC patients pN0: 19 have
high LVD shows poor prognosis: How many pharyngeal versus laryngeal. Also please give more details about the pN0 group.

6. The authors stated that we should measure global not intra nor peritumoral lymphatics to get better correlation, then in Page 8: they show that high ILD was correlated with LN metastases, etc, in contrast to their statement. There is no problem to claim that global LVD has a prognostic implication in their study, but this does not deny the importance of ILD and PLD also in the progress of tumors. I really recommend to add the statistical results of all groups (ILD, PLD, and global versus different prognostic parameters).

7. Last, the authors show us that active lymphangiogenesis (using Ki67) is happening in HNSCC tumors. It will be interesting if they show us if the presence of active lymphangiogenesis has any correlation with clinicopathologic prognostic parameters including survival.

Thanks

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.