Reviewer's report

Title: Increased serum levels of tumour-associated trypsin inhibitor independently predict a poor prognosis in colorectal cancer patients

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Reviewer: Stefan Fichtner-Feigl

Reviewer's report:

In the manuscript “Increased serum levels of tumour-associated trypsin inhibitor independently predict a poor prognosis in colorectal cancer patients” Gaber et al. try to establish sTATI is a valuable tool to preoperatively assess DFS in colorectal cancer patients. The group of authors has previously published a similar manuscript using tumor derived TATI. This study is of potential interest, however it is of limited novelty and lacks important details.

Major Revision

1. sTATI has been shown previously to be correlated to CRC. Moreover sTATI has been connected to a variety of cancer entities, i.e. ovarian cancer, bladder cancer, renal cancer, breast cancer…. Therefore sTATI is a rather unspecific molecule, which limits its effect as a diagnostic tool. The authors should point out the additional information their manuscript provides to already published work on this topic.

2. The authors have published similar data on tTATI before. However, no correlation between sTATI and tTATI is now observed. Can the authors give a convincing explanation for this discrepancy?

3. Is there a drop in sTATI following curative resection? Is there an increase in sTATI during recurrence?

4. The authors should provide data about the influence of neoadjuvant therapy on the level of sTATI.

5. The authors point out that right-sided colon cancer showed higher sTATI. Is there a reasonable explanation for this? Is there a difference between rectal cancer and colon cancer?

6. The authors point out that renal function can influence sTATI levels. The authors must rule out that impaired renal function in their cohort was a reason for increased sTATI levels.

Minor Revision

7. Last sentence of Discussion should be “with Stage II and III disease”.

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