Reviewer's report

Title: Y-box protein-1/p18 fragment identifies malignancies in patients with chronic liver disease

Version: 1 Date: 30 December 2010

Reviewer: Andreas Teufel

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript submitted by Tacke et al. entitled “Y-box protein-1/p18 fragment identifies malignancies in patients with chronic liver disease” deals with the clinical and diagnostic value of YB-1 protein fragment p18 (YB-1/p18), a cold shock protein, in serum based screening for in patients with chronic liver diseases.

The manuscript is well written. The experiments were carried out straight forward and in logical order. Generally, this is an interesting piece of work warranting publication.

However, I would suggest the authors change a few issues in the manuscript.

1) The section on malignancies other than HCC is not of major interest given the low number on patients investigated. Since the manuscript investigates several diverse subgroups which is close to confusing the reader it would benefit from dropping this part.

The authors should investigate this issue in subsequent studies with a larger number of patients.

2) I would further appreciate having absolute numbers of patients AND percentages of the total cohort for all subgroups.

3) Since the benefit in HCC screening seems to come from combination of several markers including AFP and YB1 the authors should discuss the available literature on those combinatory screening trials with AFP and markers other than YB1

4) How many patients were AFP AND YB1 positive? And does this number have an influence on the statistics provided in this manuscript, especially with respect to superiority of markers.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.