Reviewer's report

Title: Predictive and prognostic relevance of circulating nucleosomes and oncological biomarkers in liver cancer patients undergoing transarterial chemoembolization therapy

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Reviewer: Andreas Teufel

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Review Kohles et al „Predictive and prognostic…” BMC Cancer

The work by Kohles et al provides a comprehensive overview over the changes in levels in multiple potential biomarkers measured before and shortly after TACE. Although the authors certainly put a lot of effort into this work the manuscript has several shortcomings.

1) There is substantial doubt on the prospective nature of this study. How come a variance in TACE evaluation between 22 and 216 days?

2) There is no point in evaluating a TACE outcome of a single TACE after 216 days. I assume that this/these patients have / has received multiple TACE treatments and may therefore not be comparable to single TACE

In general, this is a systematic problem that it was not clear how many TACE treatments patients received

Also there is no point including patients who did not receive their first TACE treatment

3) Only 17 patients died. What is the treatment of patients currently alive? TACE, sorafenib? Is an effect of secondary treatment excluded?

4) Of the many factors described by the authors: what are sensitivity / specificity or positive predictive value of the most significantly changed “markers”?

5) A clear message is missing, the manuscript is just a summary of multiple marker levels. Which marker do the authors suggest to pursue for further evaluation?

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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'