Author's response to reviews

Title: Neutrophilic airways inflammation in lung cancer: the role of exhaled LTB-4 and IL-8

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Professor Storey,

thank-you for the review of our paper: “Neutrophilic airways inflammation in lung cancer: the role of exhaled LTB-4 and IL-8”.

We are very grateful for all your helpful comments.
We have revised our manuscript according to the reviewers’ comments and highlighted the changes in bold.
Our replies to the specific comments of the reviewers are as follows:
Review 1

Although the Authors have responded to my critiques in a satisfactory way, some minor points should be corrected.

Minor

C1: In the abstract the Authors state that they collected good quality induced sputum from ten controls but in the results they state that fifteen controls were not able to produce adequate sputum samples. Since the total number of controls is 35, 25 healthy subjects (and not 15 healthy subjects) were not able to produce adequate sputum samples.

R1: Thank you for your proper observation. We now corrected the text accordingly.

C2: In the first page of the discussion, the Authors repeat twice “In order to” in the sentence: In order to give a contribution to this curious inflammatory origin of lung tumour...

R2: Thank you for your observation. I’m sorry but there was a transcriptional mistake that we now corrected.
Increased levels of LTB4 and IL-8 in EBC and whole blood were clearly described in patients with NSCLC and concentration levels increased along with cancer progression. In the revised manuscript, the authors have added Figure 3 and corrected the number of patient. I have some minor comments.

Minor

C1: NSCLC column data of Figure 1A must be the sum of Figure 2A. Despite the presence of low level data (less than 10 pg/ml) of LTB4 in each stage in Figure 2A, there is no data showing less than 10 pg/ml in Figure 1A.
R1: Thank you for your comment. There was a mistake with figure 2A (Building the figure, absentmindedly we inserted the stage of lung cancer (1-2-3-4) in the first line of the excel table as it was a LTB4 value). We now corrected figure 2A accordingly.

C2: In Figure 2A, the mean value of LTB4 in stage I, stage II and stage III seems to be around 25, 40, 45 pg/ml, though authors described 31.8, 42.5 and 55.0 pg/ml in the results section (page 8).
R2: Thank you for your comment. I’m sorry but there was a mistake also in the results’ transcription of figure 2A that we now corrected in the text. However, as stated in the material and method, data were expressed as a median (25% percentile-75% percentile).

C3: Figure 3A is not properly arranged.
R3: We modified figure 3A accordingly.

C4: In material and methods section (page 5), “Written informed consent was obtained from all subjects upon approval of the study by the Ethic Committees of the two hospitals with pleural effusion.” What does this pleural effusion mean?
R4: Thank you for your observation. I’m sorry but there was a transcriptional mistake that we now corrected. No patients enrolled suffered from pleural effusion.
Hoping that the revised version of our manuscript meets the selection criteria of your Journal,

Sincerely,

Giovanna Elisiana Carpagnano.