Reviewers report

Title: Diet Folate, DNA Methylation and Genetic Polymorphisms of MTHFR C677T in Association with the Prognosis of Esophageal Squamous Cell Carcinoma

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Reviewer: Suminori Kono

Reviewers report:

This small follow-up study in China (n = 125) showed a protective association between dietary folate intake and post-surgical survival. Results are straightforward, but the Methods are poorly described and the Discussion is repetitive with respect to some points.

Compulsory comments

1. The study subjects were 80% of ESCC patients who underwent the surgery. For what reasons, were 20% of the eligible patients excluded. What were the eligibility criteria? They may be described in reference 13, but should be briefly explained.

2. It is described in the Discussion (page 11) that dietary intake of folate at the time of 1-2 years before the diagnosis was ascertained. This should be described in the Methods section. How many food items were included in the FFQ? Describe validity and reproducibility of estimated folate intake if such information is available. What is strange, only fruit folate was used in the study (page 11). Such information should have been described in the Methods.

3. If only fruit folate was used, the protective association was probably due to high fruit intake, which may be an indicator of socioeconomic status or better care after the surgery.

4 Five patients were lost to follow-up, and they were excluded. They should have been included and treated as censored cases in the analysis.

5. This reviewer is not well informed of the effect of folate on cancer survival in general. The authors imply that such information is almost null. Please describe briefly results for other sties of cancer, if any.

6. The hazard ratio was adjusted for TNA stage (Table 4). What categories of the stage were used in the adjustment? Was it dichotomous as used in Table 2?

7. English can be understood, but is not grammatically correct in many places. Consult a language expert.

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.