Reviewer's report

Title: Colon cancer molecular subtypes identified by expression profiling and associated to stroma, mucinous type and different clinical behavior

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Reviewer: margherita nannini

Reviewer's report:

In the present paper the authors presented a novel classification of primary colon cancer based on specific expression patterns. In particular they have identified four tumour subtypes by unsupervised analysis of gene expression associated to different prognostic behavior, that were independent of the histopathological stages. Genes belonging to tumour microenvironment seemed to be determinant for the malignant power of the tumour.

In the era of molecular classifications and targeted therapies, the topic of this paper is very interesting, especially the role of stroma in the biologic background of colon cancer, because it may represent a novel therapeutic target for the development of new compounds.

The paper is well written and it is acceptable for publication after only minor revisions:

- in the background section I suggest to describe better the role of gene expression in colon cancer (primary tumour vs normal mucosa; primary tumours at different stages; primary tumours vs metastases; synchronous vs metachronous metastases) in order to give a detailed overview of the topic.

- in the background section I also suggest to emphasize the lack of prognostic and predictive factors in clinical practice by now in order to underline the aim of the study.

- in the discussion section I suggest to report the pre-clinical and clinical evidences on the role of microenvironment on tumour development, focusing on novel compounds targeting the stroma.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.