Reviewer's report

Title: Fascin overexpression promotes neoplastic progression in OSCC.

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Reviewer: Johanna Ivaska

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In their manuscript Alam and co-workers have investigated the function of fascin in OSCC cells. They show that overexpression of fascin in an OSCC cell line induces adhesion, migration, invasion and production of MMP2 in vitro. They also present some data suggesting that overexpression of fascin correlates with loss of E-cadherin and reduced cell-cell contacts in cells. They also show that cells overexpressing fascin proliferation more in vitro and in vivo in mouse xenografts. Finally they analyze fascin expression in over 200 clinical samples and show that high-levels of fascin correlate with poor prognosis and the occurrence of metastasis.

The role of fascin in promoting cancer and invasion has been already demonstrated in several cancer types and fascin has been clearly linked with cancer progression, invasion and migration in several studies. However, this study contains still sufficient novelty to warrant publication in BMC cancer. They authors show for the first time that fascin may play a role in primary tumor development in OSCC. In addition, their clinical data shows that fascin levels correlate with disease free survival. The authors need to address some of the specific concerns related to the experimentation but with the requested revision this manuscript is suitable for publication.

Major compulsory revisions
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Minor essential revisions

1) The microscopy is not of sufficient quality. The GFP images are overexposed, fascin localizes everywhere (hence any claims related to co-localization are not warranted) and the localization of GFO in Figure 1 looks far better and more specific than localization of GFP-fascin. The panel labelling and the legend in figure 1 are incorrect and should be carefully revised. What are the arrows?
2) Figure 2 the magnifications of all the wounds healing panels need to be the same. Now it looks like the top panel has a smaller magnification.

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