Reviewer's report

Title: Protein markers of cancer-associated fibroblasts and tumor-initiating cells reveal subpopulations in freshly isolated ovarian cancer ascites

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Reviewer: zhiwei Hu

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Re-review the manuscript by Bjorklund M et al, titled “Protein markers of cancer-associated fibroblasts and tumor-initiating cells reveal subpopulations in freshly isolated ovarian cancer ascites”

The authors have adequately addressed most of my previous major and minor concerns/comments on the first version of their manuscript.

Major concern regarding CD133 as CSC marker in ovarian cancer
1. Introduction-page 4: “CD133 is another common marker, but is under question as a TIC marker in EOC[22, 26].”
2. Point to point response-last paragraph: “… This antibody [CD133] has been withdrawn from the market. We also note that there are now no CD133 antibodies at all available from, e.g., Abcam, Cell Signaling and others.”

Although the results from one group (ref 22, 26) indicated that CD133+ ovarian cancer cells contributed to formation of tumor vasculature not to “tumor-initiating capabilities” (ref 22), there are also several reports suggesting that CD133 is still one of reliable CSC markers in ovarian cancer (e.g., Kryczek et al. Int J Cancer 2012).

The reason for Abcam, Cell Signaling and other companies to remove CD133 antibodies from their catalogs was probably due to a patent issue, but not because CD133 is “under question as a TIC marker…”. CD133 antibodies are still available at the company that holds the patent on them.

Minor concern
1. Introduction-Since the authors examined only the CAF markers but did not actually show fibroblasts under microscope, it would not be appropriate to state that “This is the first report on CAFs in malignant ascites…”. It would be appropriate to say “…on CAF markers in…”

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.