Reviewer's report

Title: Overexpression of Snail is associated with lymph node metastasis and poor prognosis in patients with gastric cancer

Version: 1    Date: 23 August 2012

Reviewer: Tianshu Liu

Reviewer's report:

The following has to be taken into account, and some improvements should be made:

1. It would be more convinced if the effect of Lentiviral-based RNA knockdown and overexpression of Snail could be analyzed at a protein level or both mRNA and protein levels.

2. The authors analyzed the association between overexpression of Snail and the expression of VEGF and MMP11 and came to the conclusion that" Overexpression of Snail was also associated with increased VEGF and MMP11 "(Page 11, Line 20-21). Why the expression of VEGF and MMP11 were not examined in Snail down-regulated cell line?

3. In the same respect, why only MMP11 was examined to elucidate the impact of Snail on migration of GC cell lines? MMPs family has many members and to our knowledge, MMP2 and MMP9 are the two most important moleculars involved in tumor migration.

4. As we know, there are wide variations in immunohistochemistry(IHC) analysis for "low" or "high" expression in different types of cancer, and which one should be taken as a criteria is still controversial. In my opinion, it's more reasonable to analyze IHC based on two criteria--intensity and percent positivity. In this manuscript, the authors didn't take intensity into account in IHC analysis, as a result they should cite more evidence to confirm their grading method was superior to others.

5. Expression of candidate genes from cDNA Microarray analysis should be further confirmed in GC cell lines or tissues.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests’ below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

Tianshu Liu