Reviewer's report

Title: Development of a multiplex methylation-specific PCR as candidate triage test for women with an HPV-positive cervical scrape

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Reviewer: Matthias Lechner

Reviewer's report:

The authors have changed the manuscript according to suggested changes and I feel that this improved the manuscript.

Looking at the scope of the journal, I still feel that it would make the described work far more interesting if the diagnostic and predictive validity of this method was proven by testing cervical cancer samples. Sensitivity and specificity may be measured and ROC curves obtained.

The true diagnostic value can only be assessed when it is actually tested as described by the authors using two of the three markers 'We recently demonstrated that combined CADM1 and MAL promoter methylation analysis on physician-taken cervical scrapings of hrHPV-positive women was at least equally discriminatory for high-grade CIN as cytology or cytology combined with HPV16/18 genotyping [14]'.

It will be interesting to see whether the addition of hsa-miR-124-2 will make it a superior method (compared with testing it with three markers).

As also mentioned by reviewer 1, the article is technically interesting but biologically/clinically of minor relevance without these additional data. However, it was submitted as a technical advance article and I feel that it is an editorial decision whether this interesting additional information is necessarily required for publication in BMC Cancer.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

No COI.