Reviewer's report

**Title:** The prognostic role of CD133 expression in colorectal cancer: a meta-analysis

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 5 October 2012

**Reviewer:** Alex Sgambato

**Reviewer's report:**

Ms “The prognostic role of CD133 expression in colorectal cancer: a meta-analysis' by Ke Wang et al.

In this study a meta-analysis is performed to analyze the prognostic significance of CD133 in colorectal cancer. The Authors conclude that CD133 may play an important role in the progress of colorectal cancer and that overexpression of CD133 is associated with poor patient survival.

CD133 has been suggested as Cancer Stem Cells (CSCs) marker in several human cancers, including colon cancer and several studies have analyzed expression of CD133 and its relation to clinicopathological factors in colon cancer patients. Indeed, there is a great interest to definitively assess the prognostic significance of CD133 expression in colorectal cancer patients. Thus, this study is potentially of great interest.

However, several flaws limit its significance.

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

The manuscript must be rewritten in grammatical English with the help of a native English speaking-scientist or scientific English editing service.

One of the biggest limitation of this study is, as noticed by the Authors, that studies using different methods (i.e., immunostaining and RT-PCR) to evaluate CD133 expression have been included in the analysis. This is an important bias and a great limitation especially because several studies have suggested a lack of correlation between CD133 mRNA and protein level. Thus, it is very important to verify how and whether results change by including in the analysis only the studies that use immunohistochemistry.

Moreover, the studies based on immunohistochemical analyses use different antibodies and different scoring system. This might represents a further bias and Authors should consider it in their analysis.

**Minor issues not for publication**
Table 1:
1. Horsta should be corrected in Horst.
2. The indication Case/Control likely referring to Positive/Negative is not appropriate.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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