Reviewer's report

Title: Increased MiR-221 Expression in Hepatocellular Carcinoma Tissues and Its Role in Enhancing Cell Growth and Inhibiting Apoptosis in vitro

Version: 2 Date: 28 August 2012

Reviewer: Xiaojing Yang

Reviewer's report:

In this manuscript, Rong et al analyze miR-221 expression levels in a panel of FFPE tumor/normal tissue samples from 76 HCC patients. They find the expression levels of miR-221 are significantly correlated with metastasis, TNM stage, and tumor capsular infiltration of HCC patients. The authors have also found the well-established function of miR-221 in cell growth, cell cycle.

However, parts of findings in this manuscript have been extensively reported previously. The following is a list of major points which need to be addressed in order to improve the overall quality of this manuscript:

1. The authors have to address the definition of "TNM" stages and explain whether TNM stages correlate with patients outcomes.

2. The authors find that the miR-221 expression levels are correlated with clinic pathological parameters, especially with status of tumor capsular infiltration. However, they fail to demonstrate the effects of miR-221 in altering capsular infiltration status and whether clinic pathological parameters have prognostic values. A detail mechanism study is required to enhance novelty of entire study.

As the current state, the manuscript does not merit publication in BMC Cancer. Major revision is needed to address the above concerns

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