Reviewer's report

Title: Profiling of normal and malignant breast tissue show CD44high/CD24low phenotype as a predominant stem/progenitor marker when used in combination with Ep-CAM/CD49f

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Reviewer: Ming-Feng Hou

Reviewer's report:

In this article the authors showed that use of CD44high/CD24low, well known cancer stem cell (CSC) markers, in combination with Ep-CAM/CD49f markers further isolate CSCs. Overall, the manuscript is well written and methods which included functional assays of sorted cells were adequate. CSC is an important and interesting subject in breast cancer and has potential therapeutic implications. My major concern is that the finding is based on a small sample size (N = 16). Given the high heterogeneity of human breast cancer, analysis of these markers on a larger patient cohort would be useful.

Minor comments:
At the beginning of the paragraph in the introduction section, the authors implied that CSC are responsible for the death of up to 20% of women of breast cancer due to drug resistance within a short period of time. This is not true.

The last sentence in Introduction “This study set the stage .............better treatment outcome.” is overstated.

Figure 6 is mentioned in the Discussion ?

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