Reviewer’s report

Title: Functional promoter -31G/C variant of Survivin gene predict prostate cancer susceptibility among Chinese: a case control study

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Reviewer: Melissa DeRycke

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The authors investigate whether the rs9904341 5’-UTR SNP in BIRC2 (survivin) is associated with prostate cancer in Chinese men. The SNP was found to impact expression levels of survivin in other cancers previously; the authors found the SNP to be associated with prostate cancer and the association was highest among nonsmokers, nondrinkers, and men with no family history of cancer. The results are interesting and worthy of publication.

Major Compulsory Revisions
Extensive English editing is needed.

Explanation: While the paper is understandable, the English is often not standard and syntax and word choices make it difficult to read. At times these make certain statements ambiguous as to what the authors mean (please see #4 and #6 below for examples).

Additionally, there are several typos/formatting issues that should be corrected prior to publishing (please see #2 and #3 below for examples).

While the manuscript can be understood, it is difficult to do so; it would greatly benefit extensive editing. A few specific examples are below (the entire manuscript should be reviewed, however):

1. Introduction, 1st paragraph, last sentence: “Furthermore, these conclusions were advocated by some animal studies …”
   a. “supported” would be a more appropriate word than “advocated”
   b. The word “some” in the sentence makes it sound like there were animals studies that did not have the same conclusions.
   c. The sentence could be revised: “Furthermore, these conclusions were supported by animal studies …”

2. Paragraph 3 of Introduction, lines 3, 4, 6: there are what appears to be PubMed Id numbers included after the references that should be removed (20166933, 2196211, and so forth).

3. Materials and Methods, DNA extraction and polymorphism genotyping section: the symbols for degrees (°) are showing up as box-formatting or font issues?

4. Results, Characteristics and clinical features of study population subsection, line 8: “Among these patients, 40.9%...” – how this is worded it sounds like the authors are referring to a subset of the cases (the nonsmokers from the previous
sentence); however, I believe they mean to refer to all of the prostate cancer cases.

5. Discussion, first paragraph, 4th line: the gene name (survivin) has an extra ‘g’ at the end (surviving) which will not be found by spell check.

6. Discussion, second paragraph, 5th line: “Growing evidence is accumulated that…” should be modified to either “Growing evidence is accumulating that…” or “Growing evidence has accumulated that…”.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Results, Characteristics & clinical features of study population subsection: The text states that 330 of 665 men were defined as localized stage, while Table 1 states it is 390.

2. Results, Stratification analyses subsection: In the second sentence, they state that individuals with “GG/GC genotypes had a significantly increased risk of PCa than those with CC genotype”. However, according to the rest of the manuscript, the alternate allele is C, and it should be that those with CC/GC genotype have a higher risk than GG (this would match the data in Table 3).

3. Discussion, third paragraph: Authors mention a second SNP, rs8073069 that is in LD with the SNP under study. They state that it may be the causal loci influencing prostate cancer prognosis, not the SNP they studied. The authors should comment on why they think this second SNP (rs8073069) may be the causal SNP and if there is any evidence that would support it being a functional SNP.

4. Reference #49 does not appear to be correct.

Discretionary Revisions

None.

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

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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.