Author's response to reviews

Title: Clinical Implication of ZEB-1 and E-cadherin Expression in Hepatocellular carcinoma

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Editor-in-Chief

BMC cancer

Thank you for review and referees' reports.

We are sending the enclosed revised manuscript entitled “Clinical Implication of ZEB1 and E-cadherin Expression in Hepatocellular carcinoma” to BMC cancer.

Reviewer 1

Thank you for your kind advice. I have answered your question in as much detail as possible, as follows.

1. We compared the overall survival between the Zeb-1 (+)/E-cadherin (-) and Zeb-1 (+)/E-cadherin (+) groups, and described the result in Fig. 2d. (Fig 2d) (Page 17-18, Figure legends)

2. We cited the report that you suggested, and discussed the frequency of ZEB-1 positivity in HCC, as you indicated. (Ref 25, Page 10, line 23-25)

3. ZEB-1 (in combination with E-cadherin) seems a more powerful statistical tool in predicting clinical outcomes than Smad4 expression. We have described this observation in the discussion. (Page 12, line 11-13)

4. It is difficult to say whether scoring “at least 1% of nuclear staining of Zeb-1” as positive is reasonable, but E-cadherin expression was compared with noncancerous liver cells in each case. (Page 10, line 21-23)

Best regards.

Reviewer 2

Thank you for your comments.

I regard the clinical data as important and will continue studying it.

Best regards.

Reviewer 3

Thank you for your kind advice.

The mistake has been corrected and results added to the legend and text. (Page 17, line 2-13) (Page 10, line 27) (Page 11, line 22)

Best regards.
Reviewer 4
Thank you for your kind advice. I have answered your question in as much detail as possible, as follows.

Images from representative cases are shown: case 1 (a - d) and case 2 (e, f). Case 1 was classified as >10% ZEB-1 positive. a. Positive expression of ZEB-1 in cellular nuclei in HCC. b. Reduced expression of E-cadherin in HCC cells. c. ZEB-1 expression is undetectable in noncancerous liver cells. d. E-cadherin expression was observed in the cell membrane in noncancerous liver cells. Case 2 was classified as ZEB-1 negative. e. ZEB-1 was not detected in the cell nuclei in HCC cells. f. E-cadherin expression was preserved in the cell membrane in HCC cells. Legends were improved in figure 01 and 02. (Page 8, line 6-20) (Fig. 1a-f) (Page 17, 18; Figure legends)

Best regards.

We thank for your consideration and look forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions concerning the manuscript, we will be happy to answer them.

Sincerely yours

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