Reviewer's report

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

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Reviewer: Vanessa Morais Freitas

Reviewers report:

The present paper entitled “Clinical Implication of ZEB-1 and E-cadherin Expression in Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC)” shows ZEB-1 immunolocalization and its correlation with decrease of E-cadherin. The data is interesting since a recent paper (Ann Surg Oncol (2012) 19:1700–1706 Clinicopathological Significance of ZEB1 Protein in Patients with Hepatocellular Carcinoma) shows the increase of E-cadherin levels when ZEB-1 was knocked down in HCC cell lineage. However, in the published manuscript in vivo data does not approach this correlation and analyze only ZEB-1 expression by Immunoblot not by IHC.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Immunohistochemistry was well conducted and documented; however, in my opinion, images should be representative of the results, for example, low expression of E-cadherin and high expression of ZEB-1 in high-grade tumors, vascular invasion or worse prognosis samples. Not only labeling patterns (what was considered positive or negative expression) as it shows in the present version. If possible, a figure showing a sample containing both tumor and normal cells with representative labeling (high E-cadherin and low ZEB-1 in normal cells and the opposite in tumor cells) would improve this paper documentation. Also, legends must improve in figure 01 and 02.

In results, authors say “All noncancerous liver cells were ZEB-1 negative (Fig 1a, b), please highlight this, as far as I can see there are some stromal tissue in fig.1 b without labeling, this is not clear in fig.1a.

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.