Author's response to reviews

Title: Prognostic value of secreted phosphoprotein-1 in pleural effusion associated with non-small cell lung cancer

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear editor:

Thank you very much for your letter and advice. The comments from you and the reviewers have helped to strengthen this manuscript significantly. We have addressed the comments raised by the reviewers, and the amendments are highlighted in red in the revised manuscript. We hope that the revision is acceptable, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours

Yong Song
Reviewer: Georgios Stathopoulos

1. The prospective nature of the study should be stated not only in the abstract but also in the main text (methods).

Reply: We thank the reviewer for pointing out this issue. We have stated it in the main text. Please see page 4, paragraph 3.

2. The authors state that SPP1 data were normally distributed and that results are shown as mean±SD. This is not in line with figure 1, where deviation is shown asymmetrical and is probably 95% CI. This reviewer is not convinced and wants to see a dotplot instead of a boxplot with outliers.

Reply: We thank the reviewer for pointing out this issue. We recounted our data and found that the data of study group did not meet the normal distribution. So we used the Mann-Whitney U test and the results were shown as median and quartile interval. Please see page 6, paragraph 1, 2.

3. Units of measurement should be given in Figure 1 y axis.

Reply: We have added the units of measurement in Figure 1 y axis. Please see Figure 1.

4. Symbols should be explained in tables, and axes should be more clearly labeled in graphs (ie, spell out acronyms and indicate the units, ie progression-free survival in days).

Reply: We thank the reviewer for the advice. Please see Table 1-3, Figure 1, 3, 4.

5. What is progression-free survival for a patient with MPE? Please define in methods. Significant progression is vague and needs to be defined.

Reply: Significant progression are confirmed in those with target lesions in solid tumors considered as progression according to RECIST 1.1 and the malignant pleural fluid volume is rising rapidly compare with its baseline during therapy. Please see page 5, paragraph 1.

6. The paper NEEDS language editing.

Reply: We have edited the language.

Reviewer: Jordan Olson

I have some a minor revisions to the grammar, on paragraph 3 on page 5. It currently reads "...about sample like pleural fluid, So we chose... ". This is very conversational, and a rewording to "...about samples of pleural fluid. We chose..." may be more professional.

Reply: We thank the reviewer for the advice. We have modified it. Please see page 5, paragraph 3.