Reviewer's report

Title: Microvascular invasion (MVI) is a prognostic predictor for small hepatocellular carcinoma

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Reviewer: Lijian Hui

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To editor:
This paper is one of the largest retrospective study demonstrating that microvascular invasion (MVI) is a major pathological factor correlated with patient survival in single small hepatocellular carcinoma which is of significant clinical values.

Minor Essential Revisions:
1. Currently there are still some debates on the definition of microvascular invasion (MVI), what’s the criteria for MVI except for “presence of tumor emboli in a portal radicle vein, large capsule vessel or in a vascular space lined by endothelial cells” described in this manuscript?
2. The authors demonstrate that except for MVI, all the other pathological factors have no prognostic value for SHCC patients. However, there are several previous studies show that tumor histological differentiation, AFP and some other factors were predictors for HCC patients, why these factors did not correlate with the survival in SHCC patients?
3. There is a mistake in Figure 1. The figure did not show the comparison between patients with MVI and without MVI. Moreover the authors should add the p value for Cox analysis.

Discretionary Revisions:
1. The author described “Tumor inflammation” as the number of lymphocytes in tumor areas. However, inflammation is more than lymphocytes, maybe tumor infiltrative lymphocytes more appropriate than tumor inflammation.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

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