Author's response to reviews

Title: Clinicopathologic features and prognostic implications of NOK/STYK1 protein expression in non-small cell lung cancer

Authors:

Peng Chen (chenpeng-83@sohu.com)
Wei Miao Li (liweimiao6229@hotmail.com)
Qiang Lu (luqianglu@126.com)
Jian Wang (witm1976@163.com)
Xiao Long Yan (yanxiaolong@fmmu.edu.cn)
Zhi Pei Zhang (zzpzvy@fmmu.edu.cn)
Xiao Fei Li (13402988668@163.com)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear editor:
Thanks very much for your attention and the referee’s comments on the paper “Clinicopathologic features and prognostic implications of NOK/STYK1 protein expression in non-small cell lung cancer”. We have made a point-by-point response to the concerns and sincerely hope this manuscript will be finally acceptable to be published.
Thank you very much for all you help.
Best regards
Sincerely yours
Xiao-Fei Li

Editor’s comments:
You state in the results section of your abstract that "high Ki-67 LI (P=0.000)". Please could you clarify whether this was the actual p value you obtained. We would prefer it if when you report p values of 0.000 in your manuscript you quote the actual p value rather than p=0.000.
Response:
Thank you for precious comments. Associations between NOK expression and Ki-67 labeling index were evaluated using the $\chi^2$-test (please see Table 1 for the specific numerical values). SPSS software shows that P-value is 0.000 (4.086E-7). According to the suggestions from the editor, we find that it is not the proper expression approach to use P=0.000 in this paper. Consulting the previous articles of your journal, we have changed all the expression approaches of P=0.000 to P<0.001 and made colored marks. For the purpose of subsequent processing, the alteration in Fig 2.B has not been marked with a color.

Radostina Cherneva’s comments:
The authors have answered all my comments well. The manuscript is of moderate value, I think. It may be published at this stage, but I have a few concerns and that’s why I shall leave the final decision to the editor.
(1) In oncology research there is a trend towards much more modern and precise methods.
Response:
Thank the referee for precious comments. There are only a few ways to detect the expression amount of interest protein in clinically obtained tumor tissue sample. Since some lung cancer tissues in this study were saved by paraffin embedding, an immunohistochemical method was employed and it also suits for comparisons among different samples. At present, many literatures have reported the expressions of interest protein in tumor tissue detected by this method. The reviewer proposed that “in oncology research there is a trend towards much more modern and precise methods”, which was agreed with by the author. In the subsequent study, we will adopt some more modern and precise ways to explore the role of NOK in lung cancer.
(2) Another issue that undermines the significance of the results is the short duration of follow-up (restricts the evaluation of the prognostic significance); the other thing is that if someone has to characterize the clinical significance of a marker then the selection criteria should be performed in a way providing statistically significant results.
Response:
This research firstly discussed the relationship between NOK protein expression and lung cancer prognosis. As a single-center study, this experiment was affected by the number of cases into groups and the duration of follow-up, which restricted the evaluation of the prognostic significance and the characterization of NOK as a clinical marker. Although there are no sufficient evidences to help draw an absolute conclusion, the results of this study provide a new clue for use to recognize lung cancer incidence. Meanwhile, it encourages us to carry out further study and try every means to fully recognize the role of NOK in lung cancer incidence.

Naoki Watanabe’s comments:
In this revised manuscript the authors amended a part of their manuscript according to the comments by both reviewers. The authors did not respond to part of the comments, but basically the contents of this manuscript could be useful and serve us novel evidence for STYK1 protein expression in lung cancers.
Response:
Thank the referee for precious comments. In the last revision, we modified the article based on the reviewer’s comments and provided explanations for some problems. Perhaps partial answers to some questions did not satisfy the reviewer. Please point out those problems to be further answered if necessary, and we are glad to exchange ideas on the existing problems in this paper.