Reviewer's report

Title: FHL1C induces apoptosis in Notch1-dependent T-ALL cells through an interaction with RBP-J

Version: 2 Date: 25 February 2014

Reviewer: Joachim Kunz

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Patient characteristics are not sufficient, give in addition to table S3 immune phenotype and at least Notch1 mutational status. CR, PR, relapse and death (as given in table S3) are not appropriate categories of outcome because most patients with relapsed T-ALL will eventually die. More appropriate would be alive in CR, death in CR, death after non response, death after relapse, alive in second CR.

2. An ensembl transcript ID should be given for FHL1C. The authors need to give sequences for FHL1C RT-PCR primer (not given in table S2). For fig 1 b, the authors should make clear how they distinguish FHL1C from other FHL1 transcripts.

In the discussion, the authors seem to use FHL1 and FHL1C as synonyms, but should make clear which splice variant and which protein they refer to.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the abstract, "Current treatments rely on small molecule g-secretase inhibitors..." implies that g-secretase inhibitors are commonly used (which is not true); this should be replaced by "Strategies that employed g secretase inhibitors to target Notch activation have not been successful".

2. for Fig 1 b, the proportion of leukemic blasts in patients should be mentioned (or added to table S3). In the discussion, the authors should discuss why they used total PBMC, not more pure T-cells (which would be the appropriate control)

Discretionary Revisions

1. In the abstract, a short sentence should clarify the rationale of looking at FHL1C.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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.