Reviewer's report

Title: HMGA1 and HMGA2 expression and comparative analyses of HMGA2, Lin28 and let-7 miRNAs in oral squamous cell carcinoma

Version: 4 Date: 16 May 2014

Reviewer: Max Heiland

Reviewer's report:

Review fort he article „HMGA1 and HMGA2 expression and comparative analyses of HMGA2, Lin28 and let-7 miRNAs in oral squamous cell carcinoma“ to be published in BMC Cancer

1. The question posed by the authors is well defined and clear hypothized.
2. Methods are overall appropriate and well described. But,
   - How the authors guarantee, that tumor cells obtained for culturing are really squamous carcinoma cells and not e.g. fibroblasts. Did they characterized these cells? Please extend the methods section and discuss.
   - How many investigators evaluated the immunohistochemical signals? In case of different investigators, how were different results dicussed and decided?
   - What was the idea of using Ki-67 antibodys, just to indicate proliferation activity? Is there a relation to the investigated targets?
3. Data are otherwise sound and comprehensible.
4. The manuscript adheres to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.
5. The Discussion and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported by the data. But, I have some remarks:
   - Discussion part, paragraph 3: The authors discussed the fact, that multivariate risk factor analysis demonstrated that HMGA2 expression serves as an independent prognostic marker for disease-specific overall survival. Do they mean disease-specific or overall or both, which is totally different.
   - Did the authors examined the correlation between HMGA1, HMGA2, let-7, mir-98, Lin28 expression and survival on their own data? Was there a difference between the metastasized and non metastasized cases? Please discuss.
   - in what sense do the authors consider their targets as prognostic tools? To differentiate between metastasized and non metastasized cases, between limited and advanced tumor size etc? Would their tools be usefull during follow up after treatment? Please discuss.

6. Limitations of the work are clearly stated.
7. The authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both
published and unpublished.
8. The title and abstract accurately convey what has been found.
9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes, after addressing to above remarks:
   - Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Reviewer’s report
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Please number your comments and divide them into
- Minor Essential Revisions
   The author can be trusted to make these. For example, missing labels on figures, the wrong use of a term, spelling mistakes.

Level of interest
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BMC Cancer has a policy of publishing all scientifically sound research whatever its level of interest. However if you choose one of the first three categories below, we may ask the authors if they would like the manuscript considered instead for the more selective journal BMC Medicine.
   - An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English
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   - Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review
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Is it essential that this manuscript be seen by an expert statistician?
If you feel that the manuscript needs to be seen by a statistician, but are unable to assess it yourself then please could you suggest alternative experts in your confidential comments to the editors.
   - No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
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**Level of interest:** An article of importance 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:

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