Reviewer’s report

Title: ALDH1A1 overexpression is associated with the progression and prognosis in gastric cancer

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Reviewer: Jiahong Wang

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Minor Essential Revisions

In the manuscript by Li et al., the authors investigated the impact of ALDH1A1 expression on clinical parameters and the prognosis of gastric cancer patients. They found that ALDH1A1 protein expression as measured by immunohistochemistry, was significantly associated with depth invasion and lymph node metastasis. In addition, they could show that ALDH1A1 was an independent prognostic factor for both overall survival and recurrence-free survival. Finally, to correlate ALDH1A1 expression with invasive capacity of the tumors, they found a significant correlation between ALDH1A1 expression and matrix metalloproteinase 9.

In general, the study of Li et al. is characterized by a clear objective and the methods employed are leading to convincing results.

Therefore, just a few points should be considered to improve the manuscript.

Remarks:

1. A statistician should be consulted to get the opinion. However, the analysis to my knowledge is appropriate and meets the current standard in this field.

2. The correlation of ALDH1A1 expression and stage of disease in gastric cancer did not show in the manuscript, and it should be added in the results.

3. Small grammatical errors in text must be corrected before publication.

4. Previous work that examined levels of ALDH1 expression in gastric cancer and correlated it clinically (e.g. Wakamatsu, 2012) should have been acknowledged and the present study described and discussed in the context of previous work.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.