Author's response to reviews

Title: HEX expression and localization in normal mammary gland and breast carcinoma

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Author's response to reviews: see over
To: The Editor-in-Chief of BMC Cancer

From: Prof. Giuseppe Damante
Dipartimento di Scienze e Tecnologie Biomediche
Piazzale Kolbe 1,
33100 Udine - Italy-
Udine, 10-6-2006

Dear Editor,

Enclosed here, please, you find the second revision of the manuscript entitled "HEX expression and localization in normal mammary gland and breast carcinoma" by Cinzia Puppin et al., (Manuscript no: 305945768811718) that we would like to submit for publication to BMC Cancer.

All criticisms raised by Referees have been addressed and new data have been included. How Referee’s criticisms have been addressed follow in the next pages.

Moreover, in the revised version we stated that the study has been performed in compliance with the Helsinki Declaration (page 4: lines 10-12, from the top).

We hope that in this version the present paper is suitable for publication in BMC Cancer.

Send, please, correspondence to:

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Sincerely yours,

Prof. Giuseppe Damante
Reply to Referee 3 (Takahiko Kogai).

Discretionary revision

Thanks for the suggestion. We have tried to transfect cells with methods different than calcium-phosphate, but the transfection efficiency (monitored by GFP signal) was not higher than 15-20%, insufficient to detect significant changes of endogenous genes expression. However, we have not attempted to transfect cells with the systems suggested by the Referee. We will use it in the near future.
Reply to Referee (Matthew Ellis).

Major point
The Referee suggestion, to examine a relationship between ER status or ER histological score and HEX expression in the cytoplasm and nucleus, has been accomplished. The relationship between ER status and HEX nuclear and cytoplasmic expression has been calculated and the relative results are described at page 8 (lines 4-8, from the top) of the revised version. The relationship between HEX expression and the status of the progesterone receptor has been also completed; data relating nuclear HEX staining and progesterone receptor expression (page 8: lines 10-11, from the top) have been included. We did not develop a histological score to describe HEX expression because no HEX nuclear or cytoplasmic staining intensity differences were observed among the different tumour samples. This finding is now indicated (page 7: lines 14-16, from the top).

Minor point
We followed the Referee suggestion and excluded lobular invasive cancer from the analysis. As expected, no statistically significant association was found between grade and HEX nuclear staining (p= 0.7). This result has been now included (page 7: line1 from the bottom and page 8: lines 1-2, from the top).