Reviewer’s report

Title: Met-Independent Hepatocyte Growth Factor-mediated regulation of cell adhesion in human prostate cancer cells

Version: 1 Date: 2 June 2006

Reviewer: Wen Jiang

Reviewer’s report:

The study reports a possible cMET independent receptor pathway for HGF, in a panel of prostate cancer cells. The authors suggested the pathway could be a nuclear protein, nucleolin which may act a shuttle protein for HGF. A large number of techniques were used in the study, in order to establish this link. If the mechanism can be convincingly established, it would be of good interest in the subject area. However, a number of issues require clarifications. The following are major concerns.

1. Interpretation to observations on LNcap cells. A major part of the study was to compare cMET negative cells with cMET positive cells. C4-2 and PC-3 cells were used throughout the study. In figure-4, LNCap cells, similar to C4-2 cells, were found to be cMET negative. In figure-1, however, LNcap had a completely different response in spreading, from C4-2. One key question here is if this was due to the difference in nucleolin. Unfortunately, no screening on the expression of nucleolin was conducted on these cells. This is a relative easy task, but holds a great deal in verifying the claim.

2. cMET in LNcap and C4-2 cells. Figure-4A showed a small PCR product (<300bp) of the MET transcript, probably an internal region of the transcript. Figure-4B and C showed the presence or absence of MET protein of known size(s). Both LNcap and C4-2, which did not have the predicted cMET doublet, showed some extra bands that can be recognised by the antibodies. MET variants are known to exist. To exclude the possibility that the variant MET exists here, PCR reactions that cover the entire cMET transcript is necessary. Tests to clarify the extra bands are also necessary.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests