Reviewer's report

Title: Medulloblastoma outcome is adversely associated with overexpression of EEF1D, RPL30, and RPS20 on the long arm of chromosome 8.

Version: 2  Date: 7 August 2006

Reviewer: Javier S. Castresana

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General

- The manuscript describes the adverse association of overexpression of three genes on the long arm of chromosome 8 to medulloblastoma outcome. On the contrary, an specific gain at 8q (demonstrated by CGH) itself, does not associate to poor outcome. The three genes (EEF1D, RPL30, and RPS20) are related to ribosome protein production, which makes a novelty in the conclusion of the manuscript, approaching concepts of ribosome function to cancer. Another good point of the manuscript is the combined use of two techniques: CGH to explore chromosome copy number aberrations, and microchips and real time-RT-PCR to check for gene expression.

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

- No major revision are suggested.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

- Check whether the only reference quoted in the Abstract should be quoted in a long form, or following the directions for quotations along the manuscript.
- In Methods-Patient samples: line 4: the word 'were' is written twice, and only once is needed.
- In Methods-Patient samples: line 6: 'subject' might be better spelled as 'subjected'.
- Change figures 3 and 4 in the following way: Figure 3 should be the one on 'Gain of 2p, and Figure 4 should deal on Gain of 8q'. If not, the manuscript will contain important mistakes, like on page 11 (third and fourth paragraphs when quoting Figures 3 and 4), and on page 27, in lines 1 and 2, when quoting the Figures as well.
- Discussion, page 17, first paragraph: the authors should make an effort to describe the main principles of the hypothesis on ribosome protein production and cancer development. Essentially, reinforcing some of the principles described in reference number 34, and including some notes of references 35-37. They can create one more paragraph commenting on these important points.
- Conclusions: lines 5 and 6: the word 'expression' should be mentioned. It is important to underline that it is the expression of those genes and not just gains at 8q, which is adversely (mention also this word) associated to overall survival.
- Page 26 Legend to Figure 1: it should be more clear and concise. It mixes the explanation of the figure together with the interpretation of results.
  a) Line 1: change '71 medulloblastoma' for '71 medulloblastomas'.
  b) Please, erase '...showed relevance of 8q gain for overall survival'
  c) Also erase from 'For example, seven of 71....' to '...24 others to identify candidate genes'. In that way, the figure legend will just contain a description of the experimental aproach followed.
- Page 28, Table 1. In Histology of the 71 tumors, the authors show 32, 22, 17 and 3 tumors, which make a total of 74 tumors, instead of 71. The mistake should be corrected.

What next?: Accept after minor essential 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