Reviewer's report

Title: Deregulation of SnoN expression in alternate pathways of colorectal tumorigenesis.

Version: 1 Date: 26 July 2006

Reviewer: Alexander Dobrovic

Reviewer's report:

General

This is a well written paper which has the novel finding that SnoN may be either upregulated or downregulated (or unchanged) in MSI-H colorectal cancers but is only upregulated (or unchanged) in MSS colorectal cancers.

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

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

The title does not adequately represent the findings of the paper.

The legend to Figure 1 is inadequate as it does not fully explain the figure. In addition, the figure is a relatively poor representation of the data. It would be better to see all the data points.

Spelling:
Background paragraph 3: "two principle pathways" should read "two principal pathways", Reference 14. "mutations" should read "mutations"

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

I would have liked to see more discussion of the patients with SnoN downregulation as this is the more novel mechanism.

The data associating SnoN upregulation with lack of repeat track mutation in TGFBRII in the MSI-H tumours is very interesting. Even more interesting is the observation that all 9 of the tumours which did not have SnoN upregulated had TGFBRII mutation. Were any of these patients down-regulated?

Further information on the MSI-H tumours such as MLH1 methylation status and BRAF mutation status would have been of interest to show if the MSI-H patients are a homogeneous group. Even though patients that were known to be HNPCC, were excluded, some of these patients may nevertheless have had a germline mutation.

I would not expect the authors to re-do the study but beta actin is a very poor choice of a normalisation marker for Q RT-PCR.

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