Reviewer’s report

Title: Quantitative evaluation of RASSF1A methylation in the non-lesional, regenerative and neoplastic liver.

Version: 4 Date: 11 November 2005

Reviewer: Jingde Zhu

Reviewer’s report:

General

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

1, I have requested for the further information for concerning Table 3 and Fig. 3, for the real time PCR analysis of the methylation status of the RASSF1A in various setting. “3, The methylation status of the CpG in clinical sample should be put in the context of the sequence. The presentation in Fig. 3 is lacking the required clarity. It is necessary to include the real data (sequencing).”

However, the requested data have not been provided in the revised version and I have difficult to assess both logic and the merit of the relevant conclusion.

Due to the way of expression, it has been difficult for me to get the exact the number of the cases in different settings have been analyzed.

Taking the following sentences in the Result section as example

Real-Time PCR analysis:

a gradual but significant increase in the methylation index of RASSF1A was seen from cirrhosis to HN (how many cases?) to HCC( how many cases?) (Figure 3A). Cirrhotic tissue had a methylation index significantly lower than that detected in HN (the ratio : the changed/the total analyzed, p=0.0024) and the latter had a methylation index significantly lower than that detected in HCC (the ratio : the changed/the total analyzed, p<0.001).

2, As the case No in each setting is pretty small, I am not sure if the statistic analysis of the data used in this paper is adequate. The expert review on the statistic analysis is required.

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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)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions
Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes

Declaration of competing interests: No