Reviewer's report

Title: Association of diminished expression of RASSF1A with promoter methylation in primary gastric cancer

Version: 1 Date: 18 March 2007

Reviewer: Javier S. Castresana

Reviewer's report:

General
This manuscript studies the expression status of RASSF1A in gastric cancer. The authors checked for it in two ways: by RT-PCR (RNA expression) and by western blot (protein expression). Also, methylation determination was assessed by MSP after bisulfite treatment of genomic DNA. All 54 specimens corresponded to Chinese patients. The results show a lower level of expression of RASSF1A in the tumor samples than in the surrounding normal tissues. Also, hypermethylation at its promoter level was determined and associated to lower expression. The general conclusion is that RASSF1A contributes to gastric cancer through promoter methylation and decreased expression.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
No comments about this point.

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 should include a clear reference to "Chinese patients", to make the whole manuscript a new piece of work with total sense if being published, as these results are already known from the literature, except those referred to western blot, maybe. Below, two possibilities (not the only ones) are given as candidates of a new title.
  1. Association of diminished expression of RASSF1A with promoter methylation in primary gastric cancer from Chinese patients.
  2. Association of diminished expression of RASSF1A with promoter methylation in primary gastric cancer from patients of central China.
- Page 8, at the end of the page: The following sentence does not seem to be well formulated:
  This is most likely caused by the contamination of normal tissues, I M tissue within the tumor...
  I M is not understood. Please, construct the sentence in order to say that normal cells can contaminate the tumor and the opposite.
- Page 9, 3rd paragraph, 3rd line: RASSF1A activating RAS may require heterobimerization of RASSF1A...
  The word heterobimerization should be said as heterodimerization (with d instead of b).

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
No comments about this point.

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: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.