Reviewer's report

Title: Clonal mutations in primary human glial tumors: evidence in support of the mutator hypothesis

Version: 3 Date: 20 June 2007

Reviewer: Songsak Petmitr

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript analyzes the genetic alterations in Diffuse Astrocytoma (DA) and Glioblastoma Multiforme (GBM) by RAPD with a set of 15 ten-mer primers. By comparison of altered bands, the higher number of genetic change was found in DA than in GBM consequence of an increase mutation rate in early tumorigenesis than occur in GBM. However, there are several concerns as list below.

1. The authors did not mention that the tumor specimens collection have been approved from the Ethic Committee (in Materials and or Methods). Is this work approved by Ethic Committee?
2. The authors select 5 altered bands further analysis by cloning, sequencing, and homology search in genome database, but they did not point out these altered band were amplified from which primers.
3. The authors conclude that these unique sequences were homology to HERV-K, L1 repeat sequence and Chi-core sequences, but no detail about the location of these unique sequences and the frequency of these sequences presence in DA and GBM.
4. The authors analyze the genetic alterations in DA and GBM base on the number of altered band amplified from random primers. However, no detail about the chromosomal region alterations concerning to these altered bands in DA and GBM, and no detail about the correlation of these chromosomal alterations with the clinopathological data.

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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 of limited interest
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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