Author's response to reviews

Title: Genomic imbalances in 5918 malignant epithelial tumors: An explorative meta-analysis of chromosomal CGH data.

Authors:

Michael Baudis (mbaudis@gmail.com)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear editors,

I have read the opinions regarding the manuscript. While it seems that the general acceptance is good, I have introduced some changes following the reviewer's comments. A revision of the manuscript will be submitted with this letter. I leave it to your editorial discretion to require addtl. corrections.

Of note, since I have moved to a new institution, I give my new address here, too.

Sincerely,

Michael Baudis.

Institute of Molecular Biology
University of Zurich
Winterthurerstrasse 190
CH-8057 Zurich
Switzerland

Reviewer 1

"The author mentions the chromosomal aberrations more frequently observed throughout the panel of different tumors, from which some subsets occur in most entities, and although mentioning (describing) which ones in which types of tumors, he does not discuss it, leaving the reader without a clear overview."

As noted, this article is aimed at the description and visualization of common and divergent genomic imbalances in epithelial neoplasias. Comparisons of aberration frequencies have been limited to the most frequent regions. For general pattern comparisons, only some outstanding examples have been mentioned (relatedness of SCC entities, similarity of renal vs. thyroid ca.). Otherwise, lengthy discussions have been consciously omitted. As encouragement for active data exploration, the following sentences have now been included:

"Apart from these observations, one should refer to the accompanying figures for a general
comparison of patterns in different clinico-pathological groups. Also, the use of the Progenetix website tools is encouraged.

"Wording mistake on page 12, first paragraph: “...mapped distal of 8q24 (e.g. 8q21...”, probably the author means: proximal to 8q24.”

This is an obvious error and has been fixed.

"but it omits gain of chromosome 7, which in the figure looks as frequent as gain of 5p ...”

That observation is correct, and 7(q) has been inserted here.

Reviewer 2:

"The author should compare his findings to that of other cross tumour comparisons such as Myllykangas S, et al. DNA copy number amplification profiling of human neoplasms. Oncogene. 2006 Nov 23;25 ..."

A brief discussion of this valuable article has been inserted into the introduction. It was originally omitted due to the limitation to genomic gains. However, with a somehow similar approach as the current work (single cases, bioinformatics), this study has been included now.

"Additionally the discussion of regions such as 3q should include discussion to previous studies which have found similar results in specific subtypes. For example, a pubmed search ...

This study is not aimed at reviewing all the hundreds of articles discussing specific chromosomal imbalance findings in the literature, and of speculating about relevance of known or presumed target genes. Obviously, many specific, disease related patterns have been described previously, and this is certainly true for such a prominent region as distal 3q in certain carcinoma types. I have introduced the sentence " For a detailed discussion of the region-specific changes and patterns related to single
disease entities, the existing literature should be considered."

into the conclusions.