Author's response to reviews

Title: Identification of a robust gene signature that predicts breast cancer outcome in independent data sets

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Sir or Madam:

Please find enclosed a revised version of our manuscript entitled "Identification of a robust gene signature that predicts breast cancer outcome in independent data sets" by James E. Korkola et al., which we are resubmitting for consideration for publication in BMC Cancer (submission # 1345240735108392).

We wish to thank the reviewer for his comments. We have made changes to the manuscript based on the comments, as follows.

Reviewer 1 (Friend).

Reviewer Comment 1: The reviewer asks that we explicitly state that feature reselection was done in calculating the leave-one-out cross-validated classification rates on page 11, 12, and in Tables 1, 2A, and
Response: We have now added to the sentences on page 11, line 1 (The leave one-out-cross validated classification rate performed with gene re-sampling was...), page 11, paragraph 4, line 5 (We used the leave-one-out cross-validation approach with gene re-sampling during each round of validation to classify the samples based on these 21 genes), and on page 12, paragraph 2, line 1 (Kaplan-Meier survival curves were constructed based on tumor classification using the leave-one-out classification with gene re-sampling for each of the three predictive gene sets) indicating that gene re-sampling was performed during the cross-validation. Furthermore, we have added into the footnotes for Tables 1, 2A, and 2B that gene re-sampling was performed during cross-validation.

Reviewer Comment 2: The reviewer asks that the classification rates in the independent data sets be added to the abstract.

Response: We have now added to the sentence on line 5 of the results section of the abstract as follows: This gene set resulted in significant separation of patients on the basis of survival in these data sets, correctly predicting outcome in 62-65% of patients.

We hope that these changes will be satisfactory for acceptance of the manuscript for publication. Thank you for your help and consideration.

Sincerely,

F.M. Waldman, M.D., Ph.D.