Reviewer's report

Title: Expression of hepcidin mRNA is uniformly suppressed in hepatocellular carcinoma

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Reviewer: SHU_HUI zhang

Reviewer's report:

This is a potentially interesting paper in which the Authors have investigated hepcidin expression in hepatocellular carcinoma, using real-time RT-PCR. This paper may be contributory to the current debate on diagnosis of hepatocellular carcinoma and in particular on the targeted hepcidin gene therapy. The Authors confirm the data derived from the limited literature on this topic suggesting that this gene is down-expressed in hepatocellular carcinoma and up-expressed in non-cancerous tissue. The Authors also state that this gene cannot be used as a marker of differentiation. The Authors propose that the precise mechanism responsible for the suppression of hepcidin in HCC should be investigated further, focusing on its role in the development and maintenance of this cancer.

However there are many points that need to be revised, in particular on the methodology used in this work.

Major points
1. The patient's clinical and pathological data should be descripted clearly.
2. The description of the different sections of the paper (materials and methods, results, discussion and figures) were very confused and perfunctory. In particular, does normal liver tissue mean non-cancerous liver tissue!

Minor points
1. Moreover, there are several misprints in your report and even if I am not a native English speaker, your manuscript should undergo a linguistic correction.
2. Abbr.HCC should be Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) when it appears firstly.

The manuscript is not accepted for publication in this Journal unless the author should revise it carefully.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited
**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.