Reviewer's report

Title: Frequent expression loss of Inter-alpha-trypsin inhibitor heavy chain (ITIH) genes in multiple human solid tumors: A systematic expression analysis

Version: 3 Date: 3 October 2007

Reviewer: Paul Span

Reviewer's report:

General
In this manuscript Hamm et al. describe extensively the expression of ITIH genes in a large number of solid tumors from different tissues. Most genes were expressed lower in tumor when compared to normal tissue. In a more detailed analysis of ITIH2 expression in breast cancer, they find a negative correlation with ER expression.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The association of loss of ITIH2 expression with reduced survival is nowhere near significance, not even a tendency as the authors report in abstract, results and discussion. The authors could do a subgroup analysis of patients with and without lymph node invasion, and patients that received or did not receive adjuvant systemic therapy to ascertain a possible link with disease outcome or treatment efficacy. Otherwise, these data should not be shown as positive.

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 tables are not very uniform, and some (such as table 5) difficult to interpret. Page 11: statistical analysis: I presume that RFS is measured from time to "recurrence", and not "remission".

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 importance in its field
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