Reviewer's report

Title: Loss of heterozygosity at the ATBF1-A locus located in the 16q22 minimal region in breast cancer

Version: 2 Date: 3 July 2008

Reviewer: Petr Pohlreich

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General

The manuscript entitled “Loss of heterozygosity at the ATBF1-A locus located in the 16q22 minimal region in breast cancer” by Kai et al. describes the LOH analysis at the ATBF1-A locus in tumor specimens from 127 patients. The 12 tumor samples that did not demonstrate LOH but with lower ATBF1-A mRNA expression were further investigated for mutations in specific loci of ATBF1-A gene.

A significant correlation between LOH status at the ATBF1-A locus and ATBF1-A mRNA levels was not found and no somatic mutations were detected in tumor samples from selected patients. However, two germ-line alterations of the gene were identified.

Major Compulsory Revisions

The choice of tumor samples for mutational analysis may be valid. However, the number of informative tumor samples was limited (52/107 samples). The group of twelve patients screened for mutations is small. Analysis of ATBF1-A in a larger group of patients or in the whole cohort of tested breast cancer patients should give more accurate results about the spectrum of somatic or germ-line mutations.

Minor Essential Revisions

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

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'