Reviewer's report

Title: A Survey of CK8 Expression in Head and Neck Epithelia

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Reviewer: Robert G Oshima

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'A Survey of CK8 Expression in Head and Neck Epithelia'
Christoph Matthias, Brigitte Mack, Alexander Berghaus and Olivier Gires
BMC Cancer

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? NO
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? NO
3. Are the data sound? YES
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?Yes
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? yes
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?Yes
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?Yes
9. Is the writing acceptable?Yes


This represents a straightforward extension of previous work that finds K8 expression in premalignant and malignant lesion of the head and neck. Immunohistochemical reaction is adequate. However, interpretation of the cancer state of the positive reactive cells is apparently based on interpretation of the hematoxylin stained materials. While interpretation of the state of positive reactive cells is based on pattern recognition, it would be useful for the authors to summarize the critical characteristics used to make the diagnosis. Second, this study differs significantly from the study discussed in the text using disseminated disease of a mouse transgenic Neu model because luminal tumors start positive for K8/K18 while the squamous epithelial tissues are generally negative. Thus activation of the expression of K8 is more dramatic on a low background. K8/K18 iare persistent, not induced in the Neu mammary tumor system. This survey is probably useful for those making diagnosis of head and neck cancers, although I believe it only adds to the current and prevailing interpretation of K8 reaction.
The authors should reconsider the use of the CK8 abbreviation. Prevailing consensus nomenclature would favor K8 or perhaps KRT8 at the gene level.

Accept after minor essential revisions