Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Flow-cytometric monitoring of disease-associated expression of 9-O-acetylated sialoglycoproteins in combination with known CD antigens, as an index for MRD in children with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia: a two-year longitudinal follow-up study

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 26 September 2007

**Reviewer:** giuseppe gaipa

**Reviewer’s report:**

**General**
The manuscript has been improved. nevertheless some questions remain opened.

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

1) Answer to Q1: The threshold of positivity to distinguishing between normal lymphocytes and leukemic blasts is crucial. The terms "minimal presence" and "higher expression" can not be used alone as a objective quantitative criteria in MRD detection. Numbers have to be indicated. The use of CD45 is not included in the MRD probes, then its contribution in addition to the others markers in the detection of MRD during follow-up is hardly evaluable. We think it should not be mentioned in this context.

2) Answer to Q2:CD10 and CD34 are expressed in bone marrow lymphocytes,in particular in regenerating samples. This criteria can not be adopted to distinghuish between normal and leukemic B cells. Only the differential expression of these markers can be adopted for the purpose.

3) Answer to Q4:The question How many patients (not samples) per time point are MRD+?, seems still open. We could not appreciated this information from table 1.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct).

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
The title of the paper should be more concerned to the feasibility of the proposed flow cytometric approach rather than the longitudinal follow-up, as the clinical impact of data presented have to be validated during longer observation time.
**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no competing interests.