Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Association of NGAL mRNA Expression with Tumor Progression and MMP-9 in Human Rectal Cancer

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 10 November 2008

**Reviewer:** Per Eriksson

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The mRNA expression of NGAL and MMP9 was determined using qPCR in 100 paired samples of rectal cancer and adjacent normal tissue. NGAL expression was positively correlated with MMP9 expression. The authors suggest that NGAL could serve as a novel marker for human rectal cancer.

The PCR analyses have been nicely performed. However, since GAPDH has been shown to be influenced by different stimuli, several housekeeping genes should have been used.

NGAL has been suggested to influence MMP9 activity by complex binding and thereby prolonging the activity of MMP9. Just measuring the mRNA expression of NGAL does not support the conclusion that NGAL plays an important role in the progression of human rectal cancer as stated in the abstract. To be more informative, the study would benefit from measuring NGAL/MMP9 complexes as well as MMP9 activity.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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