Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 4 Date: 16 December 2008

Reviewer: Per Eriksson

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This is a revised version of a paper demonstrating an association of NGAL mRNA levels with tumor progression in human rectal cancer. A few modifications of the manuscript have been performed compared to the previous version. The comments about the house-keeping genes are ok. However, the main criticism on the manuscript, i.e. that it is difficult to interpret the relevance of just measuring NGAL mRNA levels, still remains. MMP9 and NGAL are co-regulated (both are activated by c-Jun N-terminal kinas). Why is NGAL a better predictor of the disease than MMP9? In my mind MMP9/NGAL complex or MMP9 activity should be measured. Just measuring NGAL mRNA will not add substantially to our knowledge about the disease mechanisms.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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

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.