Reviewer's report

Title: A case-control study on the combined effects of p53 and p73 polymorphisms on head and neck cancer risk and progression in an Italian population

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Reviewer: Jean-Gilles Charles AHOMADEGBE TOMETIN

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A case-control study on the combined effects of p53 and p73 polymorphisms on head and neck cancer risk and progression in an Italian population

By Galli P et al

In this study, the authors seek to provide new insights into the influences of p73 and p53 polymorphisms on squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck (SCCHN) risk and progression. The authors found an increased risk of SCCHN among individuals with combined p73exon2G4A and a p53 intron 6 polymorphic allele and a protective effect for those carrying p53 exon 4-p53 intron 6 diplotype combinations.

Major compulsory revision

Statistical analysis is well done, but there are many confusions and the biological terms used in this report are not correct. The authors use very frequently mutant allele instead of polymorphic allele or SNP for 16bp duplication in p53 intron 3 (Page 2, lanes 11, 17 and 22: page 3 lanes 18 and 19, page 4 lane 10; page 7, lane 9 ……..). Moreover some of the results have already been published by others laboratories (Mitra , Ann Hum Genet 2003 Jan;67 26-34). In conclusion, considering the design of this study, I do not think that this manuscript is suitable for publication in BMC Cancer.

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'