Reviewer's report

Title: CXCR4 expression on circulating pan-cytokeratin positive cells is associated with survival in patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer

Version: 1 Date: 15 December 2008

Reviewer: Makoto Suzuki

Reviewer's report:

The experiments and the data may be right.
However, the interpretation for the data seems insufficient.

Abstract
Methods
“Pan-cytokeratin positive cells were increased in the circulation of patients with NSCLC, as compared to normal control subjects.”
This is not method.

Statistical Analysis
“Cox proportional hazards models investigated the effect of high or low CXCR4 levels on survival. Hazard ratios, 95% confidence intervals, and p values were determined for each group and a Kaplan-Meier curve was produced.”
There was no Cox model analysis in this manuscript.
The authors need to enlist the services of a talented biostatistician to perform the appropriate analyses and determine which of the multiple factors independently influence prognosis.

Results and Figures
Page 7 and Page18
“p < 0.05”
Figure 2
“p <= 0.05”
Which is correct?

Figure 2
How many cases did author examine in the experiment of Figure 2?
Twenty-eight patients and 14 donors, or 13 patients and 6 donors?
Are the bars standard deviations or standard errors?

Figure 3
The scale of the vertical axis should be changed, for example, upper limit should
be 15000, so that the difference of positive cells among the groups should make easy-to-understand.

Figure 4
Log-rank test is necessary to compare survival curves.

Table 1
It should be more sophisticated.

Discussion
Fourth paragraph, Fifth paragraph, and Conclusions have no correlation with author’s experiments.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests.