Reviewer's report

Title: Activation of EpCAM signalling via cell-to-cell contact

Version: 1 Date: 23 June 2009

Reviewer: Graham Carpenter

Reviewer's report:

The research reported represents a minor advance over what the same lab has recently reported in Nature Cell Biology. That publication described the cleavage of EpCam by secretases so as to liberate an ICD fragment that then translocated to the nucleus and facilitated gene expression. As part of that study the authors reported that the cleavage events required cell:cell contact and were not observed in sparse cell cultures. This is the point of the paper submitted to BMC Cancer. The density dependent cleavage is shown in more detail as regards cell density, but without any increase in mechanistic understanding. Other experiments report that EpCam-induced gene expression is also and predictably density dependent. As is, the paper does not make any substantial new conclusions. It is somewhat of an editorial decision. Also the authors need to quantitate the data. For example in the text for Fig 1 the words decreased/increased are used without any quantitation though it is present in the figures. Some of these changes are small and the reader should not have to dig it out.

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 have no competing interests