Reviewer's report

**Title:** Expression of Hiwi in human esophageal squamous cell carcinoma is significantly associated with poorer prognosis

**Version:** 4  **Date:** 29 June 2009

**Reviewer:** Helge Taubert

**Reviewer's report:**

The manuscript by He et al. investigates the expression of Hiwi in human esophageal squamous cell carcinoma and its correlation with prognosis. The manuscript is of great interest since there are only a few studies concerning Hiwi expression malignant tumors and its association with patient's outcome. However, there are several flaws that do not allow the reviewer to suggest to accept the manuscript in its present form.

**Major compulsory revisions**

There are several questions with the statistical analyses.

How long was the follow-up period? Do the data of t stage and the tumor size fit together and can both be included in the same analysis at the same time (table 1)? Was the UICC stage correlated with survival in their patient group?

**Minor essential revisions**

There are several mistakes in the language that need a revision by a native speaker.

Where is Hiwi described as a transcription factor (p. 5)? Sentences like "the expression of Hiwi in cytoplasm enables the tumor to have higher degree tumour stemness, which in turn results in poorer clinical outcome for the patients with esophageal squamous cell carcinomas! (Abstract, conclusions) or "Our results highlight the involvement of stem cell associated genes in carcinogenesis..." (p. 15) should be revised.

**Discretionary Revisions**

It is difficult to evaluate the results of the authors since they apply an antibody that is not commercially available.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

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