Author’s response to reviews

Title: Evaluation of suitable reference genes in gene expression studies of HBV-related hepatocellular carcinoma by real-time PCR

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Dear Sir or Madam:

We would like to submit the enclosed manuscript entitled “Evaluation of suitable reference genes in gene expression studies of HBV-related hepatocellular carcinoma by real-time PCR”, which we wish to be considered for publication in BMC Cancer.

Housekeeping genes are commonly used as endogenous references to account for experiment differences in gene expression assay. However, recently, they are reported been de-regulated in different cancers, which may lead to unreliable results and consequently misinterpretations. This study focused on gene expression profiles in hepatitis B virus (HBV)-related human hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) specimens, where there is no conclusive systematic study comparing the suitability of different candidate reference genes yet to date. Meanwhile, it may enlighten us on the irrationality of normalization qPCR data by using so-called housekeeping genes which are actually differentially expressed in different investigating tissues.

We believe the paper may be of particular interest to the readers of your journal.

Sincerely yours,

Li-Yun, Fu