Reviewer's report

Title: Analysis of circulating hem-endothelial marker RNA levels in preterm infants

Version: 2 Date: 18 April 2009

Reviewer: Shahin Rafii

Reviewer's report:

The data presented in this paper is solely based on PCR analyses of the peripheral blood of premature and mature neonates. There is no FACS analyses done to determine the total number of authentic circulating endothelial progenitor cells. However, given the difficulty of obtaining these samples, the authors should be applauded and encouraged to improve the novelty of this report by performing immunohistochemical staining on some of the cytospined samples. This will demonstrate what percentages of the circulating cells are indeed authentic endothelial progenitors.

In the absence of these data it is unclear precisely what percentages of the circulating vascular cells as few cells may express large amount of a give vascular markers. Furthermore, the total number of the circulating cells may provide for a more reliable statistically significant biological surrogate marker than the absolute RNA levels.

This paper may be considered for resubmission after the authors have responded to these comments.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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