Reviewer's report

Title: Alveolar epithelial cells undergo epithelial-mesenchymal transition in acute interstitial pneumonia: a case report

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Reviewer: shaoxi SC cai

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The manuscript by Li Hongbo and co-authors addressed a case of acute interstitial pneumonia (AIP) and reported the development of epithelial–mesenchymal transition (EMT) as an additional source of myofibroblasts in AIP.

In general, the case presented is typical and the manuscript is well-written. However, please response to some of my major concerns regarding to the manuscript as follow:

1. Actually, since it was reported in 1935 by Hamman and Rich, the clinical management of AIP has been well documented. In present manuscript, the emergence of EMT was evident via the upregulation of EMT related proteins including SPC, #-SMA and Snail through IHC and ultrastructural examinations. Although the finding is interesting, I have major problems with the references. In other words, how does the upregulation define? Immunostaining is not an appropriate technique for quantification and at least how does the quantification carry out need to be clearly described. Without a reliable control, it is really difficult to reach the conclusion. Also, it is a single case report about the development of EMT in AIP patient and the individual variation owing to the small sample size make the conclusion less confident. Furthermore, EMT has been shown in other pulmonary diseases, such as asthma and COPD. In this case, the conclusion could only be made after careful exclusion of other potential reasons.

2. The authors need to put some more words in interpreting what is the possible involvements of EMT in AIP and how the finding may be beneficial for the treatment of AIP in discussion?

Minor

1. The arrangement of the figures is confused.

2. page 8, last line “...relatively little collagen deposition compared to that in NAIP.” “NAIP” should be read “NSIP”

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests