Reviewer's report

Title: Hepatocyte and Keratinocyte growth factors and their receptors are not decreased in human lung emphysema

Version: 1 Date: 22 July 2005

Reviewer: Lorraine Ware

Reviewer's report:

General

In this carefully done human study, the authors have measured levels of KGF and HGF mRNA and protein in lung samples from patients with emphysema compared to controls without emphysema. Although the study is highly descriptive, it does provide new information on levels of tissue expression of KGF and HGF protein and mRNA in emphysematous lungs compared to non-emphysematous controls. Contrary to the authors' hypothesis, levels of HGF and KGF were not different between controls and emphysema patients although levels of HGF protein and mRNA did have some correlation with the degree of emphysema as measured by pulmonary function tests. Although this study is of limited interest, it is methodologically sound. The major limitation of the study is the use of lung homogenates for the entire study. Future studies should address the expression of HGF and KGF in a more cell specific fashion.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

It would be helpful to include a more thorough discussion of the pathophysiologic significance of the correlation of high levels of HGF with more severe emphysema. The authors suggest that preserved expression of HGF-R suggests a possible role for HGF or other growth factor therapy. Do the authors postulate that the higher HGF levels observed in more severe emphysema are helpful or harmful?

A more thorough discussion of the limitations would also be useful including the limitation of the analysis only of lung homogenates.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No

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