Reviewer's report

Title: High Serum Concentrations of Autoantibodies to HSP47 in Nonspecific Interstitial Pneumonia Compared with Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis

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Reviewer: Hiroaki Satoh

Reviewer's report:

The authors studied HSP47 in patients with nonspecific interstitial pneumonia (NSIP) using sera from 38 patients with various forms of IIPs and 18 healthy volunteers. Overall, this paper is interesting and well written, but has some points to be answered.

Comments

(1) One major comment is related to "selection of patients" and "study setting". The authors should describe when they collect the sera of the patients, and how many patients with IIPs were diagnosed during the study period in their institution and how they select the 38 patients included in this study. Was there any patient selection? There seems no "intended" selection; however, I am afraid that comparison among such small groups of selected patients is inappropriate to induce the scientific conclusion. If the author did not selected by intension, do the patient groups represent general patient population with IIPs?

(2) Is this a retrospective study or a poorly-designed prospective one with several biases? The author clarifies "study setting".

(3) From the results of respiratory function test, this study mainly included IIP patients with slight to moderate respiratory impairment. Do they represent general patient population with IIPs? In order to confirm the results of this study, well-planned prospective study with no bias should be required. Please comment on how many patients should be studied to confirm the results of this study.

(4) The author described the definition of “healthy” patients. I am afraid that the authors should examine and describe other laboratory tests including biochemical and serological tests such as rheumatoid factors and etc. Moreover, were the characteristics such as age and gender of them matched with those of patients with IIPs?

(5) I can understand the results that the authors presented, and the authors discussed some speculations, however, they did not show any mechanism of elevated serum levels of HSP47 in fibrosing NSIP. What kinds of cells have directly relation to the elevated serum levels of HSP47? Why the mechanism is specific to activity or severity of fibrosing NSIP? Again, the authors did not show any direct evidence which could clearly explain the relationship between the increased levels of HSP47 and severity or activity of fibrosing NSIP, and etc. Please explain more clearly.
(6) Is there any pathological or physiological data with regard to increase in production or decrease in metabolism and excretion of HSP47? If they are, please add them in references.

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

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.