Reviewer’s report

Title: The expression of p-ATF2 involved in the chondrocytes apoptosis of an endemic osteoarthritis, Kashin-Beck disease

Version: 4 Date: 7 April 2013

Reviewer: Francisco J Blanco

Reviewer’s report:

Authors have requested a number of comments, however they have not requested three important points submitted in the first review (points 5, 7 and 8):

5. A graphic showing the effect of different concentrations of T2 toxin in cell apoptosis must be included, as well as the effect of different concentrations of the p38 and ATF2 inhibitors.

7. Figure 2 B is not necessary, authors must to show morphologic changes characteristic of apoptosis. Then DAPI stain or Electronic Microscopy can show the apoptotic nuclear and cytoplasmic changes.

8. I suggest studying with deep detail the apoptotic results. This is a very critical point, then morphologic characterization (as previously mentioned) and study of the role of caspases in this model is crucial.

All comments are focused on the apoptosis characterization and on the role of the inhibitors in the reduction of apoptosis. I recommend them to improve the explanation or to carry out experiments to show definitive results.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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