Reviewer’s report

Title: Dissection of the mechanism of traditional Chinese medical prescription-Yiqihuoxue formula as an effective anti-fibrotic treatment for systemic sclerosis

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Reviewer: Kae Takagi

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Dissection of the mechanism of traditional Chinese medical prescription-Yiqihuoxue formula as an effective anti-fibrotic treatment for systemic sclerosis

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Authors described in vitro and in vivo efficacy of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), Yiqihuoxue, for SSc. Yiqihuoxue reduced bleomycine induced skin thickness, and suppressed in vitro collagen production of SSc derived fibroblast. Furthermore, Yiqihuoxue suppressed TGFbeta dependent Smad activation as well as collagen production.

Major concern
The data was obviously clear. But, to elucidate efficacy of TCM, comparative study between known agents for SSc treatment with (TCM) is required.

Unless the chemical compounds of Yiqihuoxue is defined, this kind of study should be published in journals related with traditional Chinese medicine.

Minor points
Most of TCM should be replaced to Yiqihuoxue.
Western blotting is unconvincing figure 5 because figures are artificially cropped.
Why authors did not described smad phosphorylation in Figure 3.