Reviewer's report

**Title:** Attenuation of early liver fibrosis by herbal compound "Diwu Yanggan" through modulating the balance between epithelial-to-mesenchymal transition and mesenchymal-to-epithelial transition

**Version:** 3  
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**Reviewer:** Wei-Fen Xie

**Reviewer's report:**

In this manuscript, the authors investigated the effect of a Chinese compound herbal preparation, DWYG, on liver fibrosis induced by CCl4 treatment. They report that DWYG alleviated the liver fibrosis. They also showed that treatment of DWYG modulated the balance between EMT and MET through reducing the expression ratio of TGF-β1/BMP-7 and inhibiting the excessive activation of Hh signaling pathway in CCl4-induced fibrotic liver tissues. Overall, the article is interesting and the results provide novel finding for understanding the effect of DWYG on liver fibrosis. However, follow concerns should be addressed.

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

Usually, the rat liver fibrosis should be induced by injection of CCl4 for at least 8 weeks. The authors only treated rat for 6 weeks. In Fig 2A and Fig 2B, they showed that CCl4 treatment induced broad necrosis of hepatocyte, but only weak fibrosis. In addition, these figures also indicated that DWYG did not significantly decrease the level of necrosis. This observation is controversial with the data of plasma ALT and AST (Fig. 2E). So the animal experiment should be repeated to achieve more convincible data.

**Minor Essential Revisions**

The figures should annotate as the order they mentioned in the text. Especially for figure 2.

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

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

**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