Reviewer's report

Title: Fuzheng Huayu recipe alleviates hepatic fibrosis via inhibiting TNF-alpha induced hepatocyte apoptosis

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Reviewer: Weizhong Chang

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The manuscript “Fuzheng Huayu recipe alleviates hepatic fibrosis via inhibiting TNF-# induced hepatocyte apoptosis” authored by Tao et al. presents the clear evidence that Fuzheng Huayu can significantly inhibit hepatocyte apoptosis and as the result it reduce the activation of HSC by the fragmented DNA from apoptotic heptocyte if inhibit the apoptosis of heptocyte by Fuzheng Huayu. The paper has provide some valuable molecular mechanism of the Fuzheng Huayu’a effect on apoptosis of heptocyte and activation of HSC. The paper fits the journal readers’ interest. It could be accepted after some reasonable revisions:

Moderate issues:
1. It’s not clear if the author was using the right control DNA. The control DNA for the activation of HSC should be DNA from heptocyte treated with vehicle.

2. As show in Fig 1E, there is no significant difference between the apoptotic index of different group at 8 weeks. It is difficult to attribute the effect of Fuzheng Huayu on the hepatic fibrosis to the inhibition of the heptoses of heptocyte which is significant at 18 hours based on data.

3. The link between activation of the HCS and hepatic fibrosis needs to be strengthened.

Minor issue#
(1) Need more evidence from literature to support the design of the study.

(2) Some material in results section need move to background section.

(3) Need clarify controls.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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