Reviewer's report

Title: Anti-tumor effect of Liqi, a Traditional Chinese Medicine prescription, in tumor bearing mice

Version: 3 Date: 16 November 2008

Reviewer: Kazumi Yagasaki

Reviewer's report:

Major points
The revised version seems to be well improved compared with the previous manuscript. High effective dose of liqi, pointed out by the two reviewers as an important problem, is well explained by authors. Experimental procedures are also sufficiently described. However, this manuscript still has small inadequate points and discrepancies. Some corrections noted below should be done before acceptance for publication.

Minor points
1. Page 1, Line 7 (P1L7): ShangHai; ‘H’ may be ‘h’. See, P3L2 from bottom.
2. P2L10: Cell cycle ‘assay’ may be Cell cycle ‘analysis’.
3. P4L7 from bottom: ‘humidity 60±5%’ ;‘relative humidity 60±5%’ seems better.
4. P4L1 from bottom: ‘---food ad libitum.’ ‘Food’ may be a pellet for rodents. If authors used a commercial pellet, then the supplier probably knows the composition. As commercial pellet for rodents usually composed of many kinds of sources derived from plants and animals, there is a possibility that components such as polyphenols and other components in the pellet interfere with the effect of liqi. If possible, authors are requested to address this possibility. If impossible, authors are requested to show its composition briefly in the text. For example, “food composition is as follows: protein?%, carbohydrate ?%, fat ?%, minerals ?%, vitamins ?%, fiber ?% and moisture ?%.”
5. P5L14: Probably PBS did not contain Ca and Mg to prevent cohesion of cells. In that case, ‘Ca- and Mg-free phosphate-buffered saline [PBS(#)’ may be better expression than ‘phosphate-buffered saline [PBS]’.
6. P5L9-8 from bottom: What time did you give animals liqi everyday? Authors are requested to mention it briefly.
7. P6L11: Between ‘cytometer’ and ‘and’, Please insert ‘(FACS Calibur; Becton Dickinson, USA)’. Therefore, ‘(FACS Calibur; Becton Dickinson, USA)’ can be deleted from P6L20-21.
8. P6L2 from bottom: ‘cells/L’. Is ‘L’ correct? mL?
10. P7L6: 0.5 mCi is very high. Probably 0.5 µCi?
11. P7L9: Authors used Ci in P7L6 as described above. Thus, 7.4x1011 Bq/mmol seems better to be replaced 20?Ci/mmol to make the unit of radioactivity the same.

12. P8L12 from bottom and P8L1 from bottom: Change properly 57 of C57BL and 1# of F1#, respectively.

13. P9L4: Did authors use Student’s t-test in Table 3 to compare the difference between the two groups? Authors used Dunnet t-test to compare the differences among three groups. Can Dunnet t-test apply to the comparison of the difference between two groups? If inapplicable, a description ‘Student’s t-test or’ seems better to be inserted just before ‘Dunnet t-test’.

14. P9L12-8 from bottom and Fig. 1: Description is different from the order of Fig. 1A and B. According to the order of the description in P9L12-8 from bottom, it seems better for readers to replace Fig. 1A (tumor weight) with Fig 1B (tumor volume).

15. P9L6-4 from bottom and Table 3: According to the description in results (P9L6-4 from bottom), *P < 0.05 in the legend of Table 3 may be **P <0.01.

16. P10L12 from bottom: ‘tumorbearing’ may be ‘tumor bearing’.

17. P11L8 and 15: antitumor may be anti-tumor (see, your submission title, P1L1)

18. P12L17: Authors mention that ‘TNF-# has a direct cytotoxic effect and induces apoptosis of tumor cells [26]’. However, some cancer cells are insensitive to TNF-#. Authors should indicate directly from their experiment or indirectly by citing literatures that sarcoma 180 cells are sensitive to TNF-#.

19. P15-18: reference section: There is no consistence in writing authors’s name. For instance, please compare ref. 9 with 10. Authors should revise the reference section according to “Instruction for authors”.

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

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.