Author's response to reviews

Title: Triple-negative breast cancer is associated with EGFR, CK5/6 and c-KIT expression in Malaysian women

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Sir or Madam,

Enclosed please find the resubmission of the manuscript entitled “Triple-negative breast cancer is associated with EGFR, CK5/6 and c-KIT expression in Malaysian women” by Shant Kishen Kanapathy Pillai, Annie Tay, Suseela Nair, and myself (Manuscript number: MS 7183550976492164).

We wish to thank the editors and referees for their kind words and thoughtful comments. We thank Reviewer #1 and Reviewer #3 for their approval on the revised manuscript. We also addressed the technical concerns raised by Reviewer #2 by incorporating new information in the revised manuscript.

Thank you for your reconsideration of my work. Please address all correspondence concerning this manuscript to me at International Medical University, Malaysia and feel free to correspond with me by e-mail (cheeonn_leong@imu.edu.my).

Sincerely,

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Authors’ response to reviewers comments of the paper

“Triple-negative breast cancer is associated with EGFR, CK5/6 and c-KIT expression in Malaysian women”

(Manuscript: MS 7183550976492164)

Shant Kishen Kanapathy Pillai, Annie Tay, Suseela Nair and Chee-Onn Leong

Senior Editors’ comment:

We would be grateful if you could address the comments in a revised manuscript and provide a cover letter giving a point-by-point response to the concerns.

Please note it is important that you respond to the comments made by referee 2. In particular we would like you to reply to the points made by this reviewer in the original review, and in particular to defend the use of the techniques you used in the study, rather than the referee's preferred technique of FISH.

Authors’ response:

The authors wish to thank the reviewers and editor(s) for their time and thoughtful comments that led to the improvement of the revised manuscript. We have addressed the concerns raised by the reviewer #2 and have revised the manuscript accordingly.
Response to Reviewer #1 and #3

Reviewers #1 comment:

*I thank the authors for their revisions. in my opinion, the manuscript could be now accepted for publication.*

Reviewer #3 comment:

*I am satisfied with the changes done.*

Authors’ response:

We thank reviewer #1 and #3 for their kind remark and approval of the manuscript.
Response to Reviewer #2

Reviewer comment:

Determination of HER2 status using FISH in cases of IHC 2+ is the current standard of care, which the current study has not performed. This and the too small number of patients included in the IHC cohort makes the data presented of limited value.

Furthermore, the authors did not even discuss these issues raised by the reviewer in the discussion.

Authors’ response:

The HER2 status of the current cohort was determined from the pathological reports. HER2 FISH was not a standard practice in Malaysia prior 2008 and hence such test was not included as part of the diagnosis. Nevertheless, we are aware that there is less concordance between positive FISH results and IHC 2+ staining [1-5]. As such, we only include tumors that have HER2 IHC score of 0 in our TNBC cohort. HER2 score 0 cases have been previously reported to be non-HER2 amplified and have high correlation with FISH [3, 6-11]. This information has now been included in the methodology and discussed in the revised manuscript.

With reference to the comment on the sample size, we agree that the current pilot cohort has a limited sample size. Nevertheless, our results are consistent with number of large cohort studies which suggest a strong association between TNBC and CK5/6, EGFR or c-Kit [12-16]. Based on this pilot study, a larger cohort is currently being planned and will include survival analysis and multiple markers testing. Thus, this pilot study addressed an important and clinically relevant question, and it is our hope that these results together with the future studies will ultimately lead to the better diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer patients in Malaysia.
We hope that the reviewers find that his/her concerns have been adequately addressed in the revised article, and in this response.

End of review.

Sincerely,

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References


