Reviewer's report

Title: Trauma-Induced Apoptosis of Thoracolumbar Intervertebral Discs: An In Vitro Analysis in Humans

Version: 1 Date: 13 March 2006

Reviewer: Jong-Beom Park

Reviewer's report:

General: major compulsory revisions
The following several questions need to be addressed.
1. Are intervertebral disc tissues obtained from primary vertebral tumor appropriate for control? In general, healthy disc tissues obtained from idiopathic scoliosis are better.

2. Is there no difference in MR grading for disc degeneration between experimental and control groups?

3. Page 5, material and method section, line 5-7: Is it possible to exclude microinfiltration of tumor cells into the disc by MRI?

4. Page 6. DNA Nick End Labeling of Tissue Sections, line 2: Did you perform the TUNEL staining using cryo-sections? In general, paraffin section is used for TUNEL staining.

5. Page 7, paragraph 1, line 8: Didn’t you used positive control?

6. Page 8, paragraph 2: The authors have to make clear whether nucleus pulposus, annulus fibrosus or both are used for this experiment because NP and AF cells may have different apoptotic pathway.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests' below