Reviewer's report

Title: Low fat intake is associated with pathological manifestations and poor recovery in patients with hepatocellular carcinoma

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Reviewer: Wenhong Cao

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The finding that low fat intake is associated with poor recovery in patients with hepatocellular carcinoma is potentially important.

Concerns:
1. Based on the number of patients, results about patients hospitalized for HCC treatments frequently suffered from protein-energy malnutrition is relatively convincing. However, results about minimal hepatic encephalopathy is associated with energy malnutrition is shaky due to a very small number of patients with MHE. Thus, the main conclusion that poor energy intake from fat is associated with MHE is problematic and needs to be further confirmed by including more cases.

2. The conclusion that deterioration of nmRQ over hospitalization is associated with poor recovery from invasive therapies for HCC is also questionable. To establish this conclusion, subjects with deterioration of nmRQ need to be compared with those without deterioration of nmRQ. The contributions from other factors such as age, sex, and severity of HCC to the poor recovery after hospitalization should be thoroughly investigated.

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

None.