Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 24 January 2013

Reviewer: Akinobu Kato

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Major compulsory revisions
The manuscript by Yamada K et al. discussed the relationship between dietary deviation and pathological manifestations in hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). They concluded that lower fat intake leads to deterioration of energy state in HCC patients, which is associated with poor recovery from invasive treatments and various pathological manifestations.

Although for the most part, the data are straightforward and convincing, it would be better to consider the following comments and to make the appropriate changes in the text.

1. As it is well recognized that elderly people tend to take less energy from fat, it is necessary to compare the fat intake of patients with liver cirrhosis (subjects) and the control group without liver disease.

2. The number of patients is limited and it would be better to increase the participant number.

3. Although the authors mentioned that the patients with minimal hepatic encephalopathy tended to take less energy from fat, the number of subjects is too small (4 patients). Thus it is difficult to conclude that this tendency is due to minimal hepatic encephalopathy and not aging. The author should increase the number of subjects.

4. The volume of discussion is quite long, it would be better to be more succinct.

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.