Reviewer's report

Title: Analysis of expression profiles of MAGE-A antigens in oral squamous cell carcinoma cell lines

Version: 1 Date: 17 August 2008

Reviewer: Stephan Schwarz

Reviewer's report:

The article by Müller-Richter et al. describes the differential expression of MAGE-A antigens in five squamous cell carcinoma cell lines. The question posed by the authors is new and well defined. The methods are appropriate and well described providing the reader with detailed methodological information. The authors demonstrate the differential expression of MAGE-A antigens by quantitative rt-PCR. The experiments are well done and presented in a reasonable way. The data are sound and well controlled, e.g. by immunohistochemistry complementary to the rt PCR data. There are 11 images providing the reader with important results of the study. The writing is acceptable.

Minor essential revisions:

1. In contrary to the title and the text the authors used material not only from oral carcinomas but also from carcinomas of the larynx and the aryepiglottic fold. Thus, they should change the title and the referring passages of the text speaking of head and neck SCC instead of oral SCC.

2. The conclusion of the abstract has to be rephrased. The last phrase of the abstract is not conclusive from the manuscript. I propose to write something like: “Conclusions: MAGE-A antigens are differentially expressed in squamous cell carcinomas of the head and neck. This observation might be the basis of forthcoming studies on responses to antineoplastic drugs or radiation therapy”.

As well the concluding remarks of the discussion must be rephrased.

3. Methods: Tumor cell lines: low grade is G1 (not G3)

4. PCI1-1: The tumor was moderately differentiated (G2). The staging was: pT2 N0 M0. Please give whether it was pN0 or cNo. M0 never carries p. G is the tumor grade and does not contribute to the stage. I recommend the reading of the UICC tumor staging manual to the authors.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

I declare that I have no competing interests.