Author's response to reviews

Title: Genomic profiling identifies common HPV-associated chromosomal alterations in squamous cell carcinomas of cervix and head and neck

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Prof. Norton,

Thank you for the evaluation of our manuscript 9987108623556258 (Genomic profiling identifies common HPV-associated alterations in squamous cell carcinomas of cervix and head and neck) by Wilting and Smeets et al and for giving us the opportunity to submit a revised version to BMC Medical Genomics. To enable peer reviewing of our manuscript we have made the requested changes to the formatting of our manuscript as indicated in detail below.

To the best of our knowledge this is the first study comparing chromosomal profiles of head and neck and cervical squamous cell carcinomas, which resulted in the identification of hrHPV-associated chromosomal alterations present in squamous cell carcinomas of different anatomical origins. This finding suggests that these alterations are crucial and specific for hrHPV-mediated carcinogenesis. Diagnostic and/or therapeutic targets based on these alterations may therefore be relevant to hrHPV-associated squamous cell carcinomas of all origins. In addition, we also identified alterations specific for squamous cell carcinomas of the head and neck region or cervix, as well as alterations common in all squamous cell carcinomas independent of the presence or absence of hrHPV. Our results indicate that chromosomal alterations in squamous cell carcinomas can be assigned to different carcinogenic pathways. We believe that the current study provides novel insights into the nature of chromosomal alterations underlying squamous cell carcinomas. Based on the foregoing new information, we consider this work to be of interest to the readership of BMC Medical Genomics.

The complete array CGH data sets of the cervical and of the head and neck squamous cell carcinomas are available at the Gene Expression Omnibus database (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/projects/geo) through the accession numbers GSE6473 and GSE12020, respectively. For the latter a reviewer access link is available: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo/query/acc.cgi?token=vlklzoeuseegclq&acc=GSE12020

I declare that (i) neither the submitted paper nor any similar paper, in whole or in part, other than an abstract, has been or will be submitted to or published in any other primary scientific journal; (ii) all of the authors are aware of and agree to the content of the paper and their being listed as an author on the paper; and (iii) none of the authors have competing interests to declare.

Sincerely yours,

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Comments to the concerns of the Editor

1) **Title page.** Please include the email addresses of all authors on the title page

We have now added the email addresses of all authors to the title page

2) **Ethics.** Experimental research that is reported in the manuscript must have been performed with the approval of an appropriate ethics committee. Research carried out on humans must be in compliance with the Helsinki Declaration (http://www.wma.net/e/policy/b3.htm), and any experimental research on animals must follow internationally recognized guidelines. A statement to this effect must appear in the Methods section of the manuscript, including the specific name of the body which gave approval, with a reference number where appropriate.

We have now added the following statement to the Materials & Methods section of the manuscript.
- page 5, lines 16-17: “This study followed the ethical guidelines of the Institutional Review Board of the VU University Medical Center.”