Reviewer’s report

Title: A longitudinal study of gene expression in healthy individuals

Version: 3 Date: 10 April 2009

Reviewer: martin petrek

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Q: I would recommend to change the title to“ …healthy non-smokers”. In the subject description it should be defined more precisely if there were some ex-smokers enrolled into this study.
A: We did not capture the former smoking status of subjects enrolled in this study.

Based on several reports and own our experience, that smoking status may change gene expression profiles, I would recommend adding missing information about the former smoking status to the limitations of the study or clarify this in the patient description.

Q: Page 1-Abstract: Results about the patients with cancer and anemia should not be main-results from the study. Two patients are not enough for conclusions.
A: We respectfully disagree since the gene expression changes were so strong and they were genes that made “biological sense”. They also agree with other reports.

I still do not agree with opinion of the authors, that results may be based on data obtained in a single patient with cancer and one with anemia, although they agree with other reports. I would expect them at least to mention this in limitations of this study.

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 have no competing interests