Reviewer's report

Title: Soluble EpCAM levels in ascites correlate with positive cytology and inhibit catumaxomab activity in vitro

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Reviewer: Narendra v Sankpal

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In the current re-submitted manuscript authors describe soluble EpCAM presence in body fluids can neutralize Catuxumomab antibody therapy.

Authors have improved manuscript. Authors now show convincing key data in a cancer line, where presence of soluble EpCAM neutralized Catuxumomab inhibitory effect.

Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. First three figures of ELISA technique do not contribute to manuscript hypothesis, more than a laboratory technique. Figure 1-3 can be part of supplementary figures if permitted. My suggestion is Figure 2B, and figure 3 can be a potential figure 1.
2. Figure 4C ELISA data need some control (EpCAM FACS or western).
3. Number of patients is still a weakness.

Following changes/experiments can improve manuscript
1. Title: Authors need to call sEpCAM as a neutralizing rather than inhibitory throughout manuscript.
2. Method section can be shortened further at least 25%.
3. Result section on ELISA Page 12-14 can be shortened to ½ page to improve manuscript and focus on hypothesis.
4. P11-12, Figure 4C. Was this experiment repeated? Some of the lines such as Panc1 have very low EpCAM at basal level, and MCF7 is one of the highest EpCAM expresser. Or Label switched? A western blot or FACS with ELISA is good control.
5. ELISA data: presentation for accumulation studies can read better: pg/mL/cells/hr
6. Figure labels stretched eg 7D.

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare no competing interests.