Reviewer’s report

Title: The expression of aldehyde dehydrogenase 1 (ALDH1) in ovarian carcinomas and its clinicopathological associations: a retrospective study

Version: 1 Date: 12 March 2015

Reviewer: Toshihiko Torigoe

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Reviewer’s comment to the authors:

The authors examined the expression of cancer stem cell marker ALDH1 in ovarian cancer tissues by immunohistochemistry. The staining methods and evaluation were almost the same as the representative reference paper (Cell Stem Cell. 2007 Nov 15; 1(5): 555–567.). They concluded that high ALDH1 expression in tumor cells was significantly associated with histological grading, early FIGO stage, and better survival, whereas that in stromal cells had no association.

This is a well-written manuscript regarding a well-designed study. The methods and evaluation are appropriate, and results are convincing.

Minor points:
It is informative if the following points are discussed precisely.
1. Known function of ALDH1 in normal stem cells, such as the biosynthesis of retinoic acid, which is a regulator of cellular proliferation, differentiation, and survival.
2. Speculation of the mechanisms of how ALDH1 expression contributes to better survival.
3. The limitation of the present study, such as histological heterogeneity of ovarian cancers and appropriateness of the cut-off points in the evaluation of immunostaining.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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