Reviewer’s report

Title: Establishment of monoclonal HCC cell lines with organ site-specific tropisms

Version: 4 Date: 28 November 2014

Reviewer: Siu Tim Cheung

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Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. The origin of the cell line HCCLM3 should be clearly described. Cite the relevant paper. Have noted the below paper which described the cell line:

   However, this paper has not been cited in the manuscript. Authors should clarify. Cite appropriate paper and acknowledge the cell line source.

2. Provide information on the cell line source, acknowledge the gift source or cell bank. Present the standard cell line authentication on the original cell line and the derived clones.

3. The authors are describing the work on lung metastasis and lymph node metastasis. Provide suitable literature review on HCC metastasis to lung and lymph node in terms of frequency etc. This will allow the readers to understand the clinical relevance. Check entire manuscript and cite appropriate references.

4. Justify in detail the use of formula:
   Total metastatic foci number of each monoclonal HCC cell line = grade I x1 + grade II x2 + grade III x3 + grade IV x4.

5. The figures are in poor quality. For example in Figure 1, photos are in low resolution, and charts too. In the charts, the two lines cannot be read for their respective data, which one is “Lymph node” or “Lung” cannot be recognized. Similarly improve the other figures.

6. The cell line subclones would need comprehensive examination to differentiate the metastasis key drivers.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests: I declare that I have no competing interests