Reviewer's report

Title: Downregulation of Toll-like receptor 4 induces suppressive effects on hepatitis B virus-related hepatocellular carcinoma via ERK1/2 signaling

Version: 2 Date: 4 August 2015

Reviewer: Robert E Roses

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes; the question is clearly presented and relevant.
2. Are the data sound? Yes; the data is compelling and well presented.
3. Do the figures appear to be genuine? Yes.
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? To my knowledge, yes.
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes. The discussion is well written and makes a compelling argument.
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? No; this is one major deficiency of the manuscript. The authors do not elaborate on limitations of the data or alternative interpretations. Some impressions in this regard:
   - use of a single cell line that may not be reflective of majority of cases of HCC
   - potential overstatement of the role of TLR4 signalling in HBV associated HCC because of the choice of cell line
   - lack of positive experiments (can tumor growth be induced with TLR4 stimulation?)
7. Do the authors acknowledge any work upon which they are building? Yes.
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes, with the reservation that the relationship with HBV is only tangentially established here because of the choice of cell line.
9. Is the writing acceptable? The writing is of high quality.