Author's response to reviews

Title: High level of serum apolipoprotein A-I is a favorable prognostic factor for overall survival in esophageal squamous cell carcinoma

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editors and Reviewers:

Thank you again for your letter and for the reviewers’ comments concerning our manuscript entitled “High level of serum apolipoprotein A-I is a favorable prognostic factor for overall survival in esophageal squamous cell carcinoma”. The comments are all valuable and very helpful for revising and improving our paper. We have studied the comments carefully and have made corrections, which we hope will be met with approval. The point-by-point answers to the comments and suggestions are listed below.

Reviewer: Claudia Andl
Q1: The language has been edited, although there are still some sentences that are not easy to understand such as in the last paragraph of the results “.. the study attributes to…”

Answer: Thank you for your suggestion about the results in the last paragraph. After consideration, we have corrected the sentences in the manuscript (Page 11, line 261-265).

Reviewer: Michael J Thomas
Q1: My comments remain the same. It has been reported at least since the mid1980's that low plasma concentrations of apoA-I were associated with poor prognosis of survival for several cancers.

Answer: Thank you for your consideration and we accept Dr. Michael J Thomas comment. As Dr. Michael J Thomas says, the concentrations of apoA-I were associated with prognosis of survival for several cancers, such as hepatocellular carcinoma, ovarian cancer, nasopharyngeal carcinoma and colon cancer, therefore, apoA-I appears to function as a key role in tumorigenesis, progression and prognosis.

Furthermore, we found that apoA-I was mentioned as a proteomic marker associated with survival in oesophageal cancer (Pre-treatment plasma proteomic markers associated with survival in oesophageal cancer (British Journal of Cancer)) but it was different from our study: 1. The most important is the inclusion criteria of patients: there are 210 ESCC patients in our study, while 24 subjects with oesophageal cancer (including 19 adenocarcinoma, 2 poorly differentiated carcinoma, 1 dysplasia, 1 ESCC) in pre-study; 2. Method: The concentrations of pre-treatment serum marker were analyzed retrospectively in our report, and in pre-study plasma samples were analyzed of by SELDI-TOF MS; 3. Statistical analysis: In our study, patients with low apoA-I levels had a significantly poor 5-year overall survival, however, in pre-study the overall survival in the 24 oesophageal cancer patients ranged from 2 months to >24 months from the date of diagnosis. Generally speaking, our study is not the repetition of other study, it is one aspect of esophageal cancer research.

Recently, a paper about apoA-I and non-metastatic nasopharyngeal carcinoma
was published (Serum apolipoprotein A-I is a novel prognostic indicator for non-metastatic nasopharyngeal carcinoma (Oncotarget)), so it is worthy to study.

Editors request:
Q1: Thank you for clarifying that informed consent was verbal. Could you add this to the manuscript please, and also clarify whether the ethics committee specifically approved the verbal informed consent process?

Answer: Due to the time constraints, we only supply a verbal note before. But now we have passed the hospital ethics committee review. Because the ethics report is Chinese, we can not reflect in the manuscript. If necessary, we can upload as a supplement.

Q2: In addition, please ensure each of the 9 authors is mentioned in the author contributions section.

Answer: Thank you for pointing this out, we have all authors described in the Author Contributions section (Page 12, line 290-294).

I am sorry that we have change the funding number to No.Q201405 in the acknowledgements section (Page 12, line 299-300),

Finally, we very much appreciate your and the referees time in reviewing our manuscript and for the valuable suggestions and comments. We are looking forward to hearing from you regarding your final decision.

With kindest regards,

Yours Sincerely

Hao Chen