Reviewer’s report

Title: The combination of CTCs and CEA can help guide the management of patients with SPNs suspected of being lung cancer

Version: 0 Date: 29 Dec 2019

Reviewer: Helmut Popper

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Dr. Zheng and colleagues present a manuscript on circulating tumor cells as an aid to evaluate solitary pulmonary nodules. Although this is a retrospective study it provides new and interesting data. A limitation of the study is the small size of nodules with benign lesions (46 versus 85 carcinoma patients).

There are some minor points missing:

1. CTCs were detected via gene copy numbers in 8 chromosomes - this should be explained in the method section

2. how was the median number of CTCs established? Again retrospectively?

3. There was a site-specific difference in CTCs - upper lobe; in the manuscript the location of the carcinomas was not mentioned; was there a higher number of upper lobe carcinomas?

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes
Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review? If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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