Reviewer’s report

Title: The precursor for nerve growth factor (proNGF) is not a serum or biopsy-rinse biomarker for thyroid cancer diagnosis

Version: 0 Date: 17 Jul 2019

Reviewer: Adrian Warfield

Reviewer's report:

This is a meritorious, well composed, logically presented manuscript with satisfactory syntax and few terminological foibles, which could easily be adjusted to house style.

The methodology involves biochemical analysis for a novel growth factor measured on serum samples and needle rinse/washings collected following aspiration of thyroid lesions. As such, there is no conventional histomorphological or cytomorphological aspect for review.

These authors' claim, that this is potentially the first study to investigate the value of this growth factor as a serum or needle rinse biomarker for thyroid cancer diagnosis, is credible.

Ergo, by default, this becomes the first paper to dismiss any such association. As a subordinate observandum, the authors do acknowledge putative relationship with hyperthyroidism and propose further investigation of this - it would, however, be primarily of aetio-pathogenetic interest and there is no suggestion that any such confirmed secondary association might prove to be of diagnostic benefit in the clinical setting. Thus, there would seem to be scant incentive for anyone to repeat this work and/or expand upon it.

There is an intrinsic statistical component, which requires professional scrutiny.

There are no images.

Supplementation of the text by tabulated results and/or graphic illustrations ought to be considered. If done well, these almost always enhance the impact to a reader.

Pending statistical validation, the decision to accept for publication here is substantially contingent upon editorial policy regarding publication of a null outcome, mindful of the risks of negative publication bias. Editorial judgement of how pivotal the findings might prove to the specialist readership, also to the wider scientific/medical community, triage with competing manuscripts and discretion over balance of journal content will all be material considerations, in line with the objectives of the Journal.
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 recommend additional statistical review

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

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