Reviewer's report

Title: Herbal compound 861 prevents hepatic fibrosis by inhibiting the TGF-β1/Smad/SnoN pathway in bile duct-ligated rats

Version: 0 Date: 03 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Hasan Mahmud Reza

Reviewer's report:

Comments to the authors (BCAM-D-17-00490):

The authors have investigated the hepatoprotective effect of herbal preparation 861 and possible mechanisms in this study. This group has been working in related field and has reported their findings earlier as well. In this paper authors have extended their study to determine underlying mechanisms in hepato-protection by herbal compound 861. They have extracted out some new information through well-designed experiments. The study is of interest to relevant researchers. However, the authors have showed less attention in writing their manuscript which has degraded the overall quality of this manuscript. The following points are needed to address before considering this paper for publication.

Major:

1. The whole article needs to be extensively edited in terms of language. The English writing is poor. The grammatical and structural errors were widespread throughout the manuscript. Authors should have complete English editing from a colleague who is familiar with scientific writing in English. Spelling mistakes are also common. Some sentences are not complete.

For example in Abstract - BDL (Bile duct ligatuion), Liver injury was assessed by performing biochemical and histological..............

Similar mistakes are common in other sections of the manuscript also.

2. Pg 9. Table 2 , last row- Why cpd 861 group in F1 and F2 is higher compared to BDL model group? Clear explanation is required.
3. Pg. 10, Table 3, comparison between BDL and Cpd 861 group should be carried out and relevant statistical significance need to be mentioned. Why TBIL & DBIL is higher in cpd 861 group compared to BDL model group?

4. Pg. 10, Line 47. The statement is not consistent with figure 3, and there is no mention of Smad2 in writing of the results.

5. Figures esp. Figure 2 & 5 are of very poor quality, they must be changed and clear images should be added.

Minor:

1. Pg. 4, Line 7-10, Reference must be given in support of those studies.

2. Terms need to be written in full when mentioned for the first time in the text. Abbreviations only need to be used when mentioned for the second time or could be indicated in the footnote/abbreviations. (eg. Pg. 5, Line 44)

3. Pg. 5, Line 56, F4= cirrhosis absence of fibrosis. This is not clear.

4. Pg. 6, Line 7, AST- full name should be Aspartate Aminotransferase & ALT should also be checked.

5. Pg. 6, Line 24, Name of the kit/ reagent is not mentioned although manufacturer's name is given. For protocols used in methodology sections, appropriate references should be included.

6. Pg 7, Line 44, sentence or meaning is not clear.

7. In Results section, the headings appear like conclusion. Formatting needs to be revised and appropriate headings need to be given.

8. Pg. 9, Line 37-41 is not clear. What is FN protein?

9. Pg. 13, line 39, More references need to be added.

10. References need to be checked for formatting errors.

11. Figure legends are too long. Repeat of same terms in heading and subsections is unnecessary. (eg. Figure -5 mention of method western blot and control is repeated).

12. Abbreviations need to be checked thoroughly.

Overall, paper needs extensive editing before being considered for publication.
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:
Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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