Author's response to reviews

Title: Accuracy of microRNAs as markers for the detection of neck lymph node metastases in patients with head and neck squamous cell carcinoma

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr. Sabina Alam,

Thank you for your e-mail concerning our manuscript entitled “Accuracy of microRNAs as markers for the detection of neck lymph node metastases in patients with head and neck squamous cell carcinoma”.

As requested in the decision letter, we are resubmitting a new revised version of the manuscript. Fortunately, the reviewers highlighted no major points. In fact, Dr. Punyadeera has accepted all revisions provided in the latest version, while Dr. Shu-Chun Lin only requested changes in a specific point of the discussion and some language corrections. All the reviewers’ suggestions were incorporated in the revised version of the manuscript and they are highlighted in the text. Below you can find a point-by-point response to all the reviewers’ concerns.

I believe this manuscript meets the stringent requirements of high scientific quality and significance, originality, and priority to be acceptable for publication in BMC MEDICINE. Further, since all the reviewers’ queries could be answered, I would like to ask you to consider this manuscript for publication in BMC MEDICINE.

Sincerely,

Andre L. Vettore

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**Responses to reviewers’ comments:**

**Reviewer 1:**

In the revised manuscript, most of the questions raised by this reviewer have been addressed. There is one serious concern in discussion section needing to be further improved: The discussion on several miRNAs targeting on E-cad and ZEB to modulate EMT seems far too speculative as no clues have been provided in this study to support such notion. The paragraph needs to be re-written or removed.

*As suggested by the reviewer, the paragraphs regarding the association between some microRNAs and their targets in the modulation of EMT were removed from the discussion section.*

*(the paragraphs removed are indicated in the revised version of the manuscript)*

**Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published**

*The article was revised by a native English speaker who corrected language mistakes whenever needed.*

**Reviewer 2:**

“I have contacted referee Punyadeera, who responded he is happy with the responses provided in your latest revision.” (Alessandro Recchioni)

*Reviewer 2 does not require any further changes in the article.*