Reviewer’s report

Title: Tissue-Infiltrating Lymphocytes Signature Predicts Survival in Patients with Early/Intermediate Stage Hepatocellular Carcinoma

Version: 0 Date: 01 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Amaia Lujambio

Reviewer's report:

Tian et al. present a novel prognostic index for early and intermediate stage hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) patients. The behavior of this index was superior to previously reported staging systems. The index involves the staining of several immune cell populations in the tumor and peritumoral tissue of HCC specimens. The study is innovative and timely, and it’s well conducted.

- My main concern (or comment) is that the paper is not always very clear. For example, the writing of the abstract could be substantially improved (correcting typos and improving clarity). Regarding the results section, it would be optimal to state why each experiment is performed (what is the aim), the result, and a short sentence summarizing the findings or the conclusions. The results section is now a compilation of results with not much cohesion. Also, it is not clear why sometimes 14 parameters are used, or 28, or 5. This should be clarified.

- It would be interesting to compare the results to a previous paper where an immune signature was created for HCC patients (Sía et al. Gastroenterology, 2018).

- In Fig. 1B, it would help to include the X-axis names in the upper panel. It’s difficult to read this way.

- In Fig. 4C, the correlation is very weak. Please mention that.
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.

Unable to assess

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.

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

Acceptable

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