Reply to the reviewers

Reviewer 1 (21453)

The English grammar and style need an accurate review. There are many methodological information and comments in the result section. They should be removed or moved to introduction or material & methods and discussion sections. By the way manuscript will be get shorter.

The results section has been reorganized in revised version following the reviewer's suggestion and the text we have moved from Results to Materials and Methods. The English content of the manuscript has been further revised by one of our native English speaking co-authors.

Reviewer 2 (03252190)

1. The authors analyze the clinical and pathological parameters together with the expression of the neural cell adhesion molecule (CD56) in biliary atresia (BA) patients. They found that the maturation of biliary epithelial cells and the expression of Notch may play a role in the pathogenesis of BA.

2. The major issue with this paper is that the control group (neonatal hepatitis syndrome) has numerous possible causes, classified as infective, anatomic/structural, metabolic, genetic, neoplastic, vascular, toxic, immune and idiopathic which may confound the findings.

We agreed with the comments from the reviewer that the Neonatal Hepatitis Syndrome (use as neonatal hepatitis (NH) in our manuscript) is a complex multifactorial disease. However, in this manuscript, the NH patient group was used as negative control especially in the morphology analysis of bile duct system in which we noted that almost none of the biliary epithelial cells expressed CD56. But as regards the clinical laboratory analysis we agree many factors can affect the outcome, thus in revised version, we have added one paragraph to address this issue in the discussion section.

3. The Metavir scoring system for prediction of fibrosis in chronic liver diseases would be better.

We thanks for the suggestion from the reviewer and will apply the Metavir scoring system to future studies.

Reviewer 3 (00070280)

This is a very detailed study regarding an uncommon illness. The authors should be congratulated on en excellent paper.

We appreciate this reviewer's generous comments which encourage us to continue working on these complex pediatric diseases.