

ANSWERING REVIEWERS



August 8, 2013

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 3571-review.doc).

Title: Antiviral therapy delays esophageal variceal bleeding in hepatitis B virus-related cirrhosis

Author: Chang-Zheng Li, Liu-Fang Cheng, Qing-Shan Li, Zhi-Qiang Wang and Jun-Hong Yan

Name of Journal: *World Journal of Gastroenterology*

ESPS Manuscript NO: 3571

The manuscript has been improved according to the suggestions of reviewers:

1 Format has been updated

2 Revision has been made according to the suggestions of the reviewers

Reviewer 1

1. Although the antiviral therapeutic agents used in this study are well known, Authors should briefly mention in the introduction the mechanism of action of these antiviral therapeutic agent. This helps the reader without while going through the manuscript.

A brief introduction of the mechanism of antiviral agents had been added to the introduction part of the revised manuscript.

2. In abstract the statement "Three cases in lamivudine treatment group and one case in adefovir group had virological breakthrough" looks confusing. What kind of breakthrough are authors talking here, Do they mean decrease of viral load?. it needs to be clarified for the better understanding for readers. Please avoid the continuous use of the word " virological breakthrough" in the text, it somehow misleads the reader.

The sentence had been re-written for less confusion.

3. Page 3: "The consequence may be worse in patients with EV". Please write in the beginning what EV stands for. It will help the readers to follow the remaining manuscript. Good idea will be to describe the symbols the first time they are used.

Meaning of EV was described in the second paragraph as "esophageal varices" when it appears for the first time.

4. Table 3: It will be good idea to provide an additional column for normal values. This

will help the non-medical readers to evaluate the advantages or disadvantages of viral therapy

A column of normal range of items comparing in the study had been added to the table in the revised manuscript.

Fig 1 and Fig 2 have no Y- axis labels.

The Y- axis labels for Fig 1 and Fig 2 had been added to the revised figures.

5. It was not clear from the manuscript that how does drug resistance lead to bleeding. It seems three patients with virological breakthrough bled. However, the viral load was not tested in these 3 patients to suggest that drug resistance would have resulted in the bleeding. Authors should mention that viral loads were not estimated in these three patients.

The viral load increased after virological breakthrough. The detailed value of viral load had been added to the revised manuscript. It may be the increased viral load that led to deterioration of liver function and bleeding.

Reviewer2

Major comment:

1. The major limitation was the relative small sample size of heterogeneous use of antiviral agents. Please address this point in the Discussion.

This point had been addressed in the Discussion part of the revised manuscript.

2. There were some recent publications about effect of entecavir on reducing hepatic events (e.g. Wong GL et al. Hepatology. 2013 Feb 6. doi: 10.1002/hep.26301). The authors may refer to them in the Discussion.

We had added this newly published paper to our reference list and discussed about it in the Discussion part of the revised manuscript.

Minor comments: 1. Please add the baseline laboratory parameters included in Table 2 to Table 1.

We had modified the tables according to the opinion.

2. What statistical method was used in Table 3? It should be Cox regression hazard model; and please also provide the hazard ratio and its 95% CI.

With Cox proportional hazard regression the hazard ratio of antiviral therapy is 11.3; 95% CI, 3.1–38.5; $P < 0.001$. The result was listed in the Result part of the revised manuscript.

3. Please add no. at risk at the bottom of Figure 1 and 2; and please change the x-axis to 12-month interval.

We had modified the figures according to the opinion.

Reviewer3

In Material and Methods, Efficacy assessment, you used names and abbreviations for liver enzymes GPT and GOT, in Table 2 you used ALT, AST for the same enzymes. It is necessary to use the same names.

The abbreviations had been revised.

3 References and typesetting were corrected

The revised parts had been marked red in the revised version of the manuscript. Thank you again for publishing our manuscript in the *World Journal of Gastroenterology*.

Sincerely yours,

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