

Response Letter

Reviewer #1:

Scientific Quality: Grade B (Very good)

Language Quality: Grade A (Priority publishing)

Conclusion: Accept (General priority)

Specific Comments to Authors: The research topic seems to be truly relevant given the high global incidence of HCC. The search for biomarkers is important not only for diagnosis, but also for assessing tumor progression. SAA1 is regarded as the important biomarker in inflammation and malignancy, but its biological role has not been fully understood despite extensive research. Despite the association with some tumors, a causal relationship has not been established. Some of the results on SAA1 remain controversial. In my opinion, the merit of the authors is that they first showed the downregulated expression of SAA1 in HCC, a decrease SAA1 expression with the increased tumor grade and disease stage. Ultimately the authors confirmed that the decreased SAA1 expression was involved in the progression of HCC. Moreover, the study identified 2 signature genes interacted with SAA1 (these data enhance the prognostic value of SAA1 in HCC). The fact that the SAA1 expression is associated with the anti-tumor immunity pathways, has an important translational value. Firstly, the lower SAA1 could be a potential therapeutic target. Furthermore, the downregulated expression of SAA1 can be used as a potential prognostic biomarker for HCC. The study was performed methodologically correct. The manuscript is well understood and easy to read. The authors provided well-constructed and well-annotated table and figures. The authors reasonably cite the latest, relevant, and comprehensive references without self-citation. In summary, the manuscript was prepared in a professional manner and certainly can be recommended for publication.

Reply: We thank the reviewer's positive comment, and we carefully studied the constructive comments from the reviewer, and we also revised the manuscript according to the requirements from editorial office. Thank the reviewer and editors for our manuscript again.

Editorial Office's comments

Science Editor: 1 Scientific quality: The manuscript describes a basic study of the SAA1 is a prognostic marker for HCC. The topic is within the scope of the WJG. (1) Classification: Grade B; (2) Summary of the Peer-Review Report: The research topic seems to be truly relevant given the high global incidence of HCC. The search for biomarkers is important not only for diagnosis, but also for assessing tumor progression. The merit of the authors is that they first showed the downregulated expression of SAA1 in HCC, a decrease SAA1 expression with the increased tumor grade and disease stage. The manuscript is well

understood and easy to read. The authors provided well-constructed and well-annotated table and figures; and (3) Format: There is 1 table and 7 figures. A total of 35 references are cited, including 22 references published in the last 3 years. There is 1 self-citation. 2 Language evaluation: Classification: Grade A. A language editing certificate issued by YHYSCI was provided. 3 Academic norms and rules: The authors provided the Biostatistics Review Certificate, the signed Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure Form and Copyright License Agreement. The study does not involve animals or humans. No academic misconduct was found in the CrossCheck detection and Bing search. 4 Supplementary comments: This is an unsolicited manuscript. The study was supported by Guizhou Provincial Natural Science Foundation. The topic has not previously been published in the WJG. The corresponding author has not published articles in the BPG. 5 Issues raised: (1) I found the authors did not provide the approved grant application form(s). Please upload the approved grant application form(s) or funding agency copy of any approval document(s); (2) I found the authors did not provide the original figures. Please provide the original figure documents. Please prepare and arrange the figures using PowerPoint to ensure that all graphs or arrows or text portions can be reprocessed by the editor; and (3) I found the authors did not write the "article highlight" section. Please write the "article highlights" section at the end of the main text. 6 Re-Review: Not required. 7 Recommendation: Conditionally accepted.

Reply: We thank the positive comments from the editorial office. And we carefully studied these comments, and in the revised manuscript, the section of article highlight was added, and the approved grant application form and the original figures were also uploaded to the submission system. We thank the editor's help again.

Editorial Office Director: I have checked the comments written by the science editor.

Reply: We thank the director's comments, and we carefully revised the manuscript and uploaded the required files according to the science editor.

Company Editor-in-Chief: I have reviewed the Peer-Review Report, the full text of the manuscript, the relevant ethics documents, and the English Language Certificate, all of which have met the basic publishing requirements of the World Journal of Gastroenterology, and the manuscript is conditionally accepted. I have sent the manuscript to the author(s) for its revision according to the Peer-Review Report, Editorial Office's comments and the Criteria for Manuscript Revision by Authors.

Reply: We thank the Editor-in-Chief from WJG, and we carefully revised the manuscript and uploaded the required documents. Thanks again for your help in our manuscript.