

Dear Editor,

We would like to submit our revised manuscript entitled “Elevated procalcitonin levels in the absence of infection: A case of PCT-secretin HCC report ” for your consideration for publication in World Journal of Clinical Cases.

We appreciate the very helpful suggestions from the expert reviewers for our original manuscript. In this revised manuscript, we have taken into consideration of all the reviewers’ comments. Our detailed response is attached below, and the specific changes in the revised manuscript are marked with blue text.

We hope you will find our revised manuscript to be acceptable for publication.

Thank you for your time and effort in handling the review of our work!

Yours sincerely,

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This is an interesting case report, however, the cause of sudden fever in the patient has not been evaluated thoroughly. Furthermore, it is important to know if antibiotics were administered pre or post surgery because an undiagnosed infective source may have responded to antibiotics with a subsequent decrease in serum PCT. These points need to be addressed.

Response: Thanks a lot! The patient's fever was unknown. So many reasons may cause fever. However, infection was the most one. We examined PCT further. The patient had an elevated PCT level. Blood analysis and blood culture results indicated that elevated PCT level was not associated with infection. And antibiotic was not given. Further, PCT level decreased dramatically postoperation and immunohistochemical analyses revealed that the tumor cells were positively for PCT. Thus, the PCT level elevation was associated with tumor cells secreted rather than infection.

The authors describe a case of patient with HCC (confirmed on pathology and immunohistochemical analyses) with high serum levels of procalcitonin on preoperative work up. This is a valuable manuscript because of the rarity of the case, however the authors would provide the preoperative imaging (MRI) and the surgical specimen images. The preoperative imaging series and the macroscopic images of the tumors, perhaps images of the operative field would enrich the case report. The discussion is concise and clear.

Response: Thanks a lot! We have added the preoperative imagings (both CT and MRI). However, surgical specimen images were not found.