

Dear Sir/Madam

I am very pleased and honored that my submitted manuscript got conditionally accepted. I would like to thank you for your comments and suggestion. Here I include answers to your valuable questions.

The writing needs some editing.

\*The writing was edited.

SEM is not appropriate for the statistics of a biomedical research paper - SEM is not a descriptive statistic, it measures variation of means not data points, and one SEM is only a 68% confidence interval, not 95%. SD needs to be used.

\*All data was re-analyzed and presented as mean and SD.

Were the Caco-2 cells always maintained sub-confluent? Those cells begin to differentiate upon confluency.

Yes, Caco-2 cells always was maintained sub-confluent. Maximum confluency about 80% was reached before each passage.

Was the passage number of the cell lines used relatively low? Is it possible that the cell sub-type characteristics of these lines can change when in culture a long time? That may affect reproducibility of the results in other laboratories.

Yes, the passage number was no more than 20-25 for all experiments conducted in this manuscript. Fresh frozen cells at early passage number kept in liquid nitrogen were used every times cells reach the passage number 25.

Unfortunately, we didn't characterize cells of late passage number and compared the results to the data presented here to confirm whether the cell sub-type characteristics of these lines can change when in culture a long time. However, it would be interesting and valuable for reproducibility for our results in other laboratories.

Kind regards,  
Samah Alharbi