

Points of criticism: 1. The authors performed a retrospective analysis, a fact that weakens the results and conclusions of the study. 2. All patients included in the study did not receive any pre-operative chemotherapy. According to the existing guidelines patients with gastric cancer tumors > T3 or any N should receive neoadjuvant treatment. So the expression of CXCL12/CXCR7 in the tissue and in lymph nodes could be impaired. 3. It is not clear in the manuscript whether the liver tissues arise from patients with gastric cancer liver metastases or not. 4. The manuscript needs thorough linguistic improvement.

ANSWER : 1. We started this work in 2010, and collected the specimens of patients with gastric cancer (2009-2010), patients were followed up from 2010 to June 2016. Due to the reasons for our English level, in the Materials part of the article joined the "a retrospective", the confusion was caused by the peer review, I am sorry. 2. In our hospital, all gastric cancer patients did not receive any pre-operative neoadjuvant treatment, including patients with gastric cancer tumors > T3 or any N. 3. The 29 cases with liver metastasis were of the intestinal type gastric cancer (after imaging diagnosis of liver metastasis of gastric cancer, one of the 30 patients refused to do fine needle aspiration), we have already explained in the article.

The authors reported that CXCR7/CXCL12 axis could play an important role in cell metastasis in gastric carcinoma. They concluded that the CXCR7/CXCL12 axis was involved in the lymph node metastasis and liver of gastric cancer. This study was interesting and excellent, and this article was well written. I have some comments as

bellow. #1. This article was described about CXCR7/CXCL12 axis. But in the Aim of Abstract, the authors wrote CXCL12/CXCR7 axis. #2. In “The Effect of CXCR7 Overexpression and Silencing on the Invasion Ability of SGC-7901 Cells In Vitro” of Results, the authors reported that “As shown in Fig.5A and 5B, SGC-7901 cells spontaneously invaded through artificial basement membrane in the absence of SDF-1” but Fig. 5 was results of Western blot assay. Moreover, the authors described “we found that CXCL12 induced a significant increase of cancer cell invasion through Matrigel, overexpressing CXCR7 cells had displayed decreased invasive ability compared with the control cells and Vector cells” but overexpressing CXCR7 cells had displayed increased invasive ability compared with the control cells and Vector cells in Figure. #3. There is no legends of figures 7,8. #4. In Discussion, the authors should change small letter to capital letter of first characters of many sentences. #5. The authors described “CXCR7 overexpression in primary gastric cancers might be an independent risk factor for lymph node and liver metastasis.” However the authors did not perform multivariate analysis in this article.

ANSWER : We have made all the changes in the manuscript, thank you very much for your valuable comments.