

Buenos Aires, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017

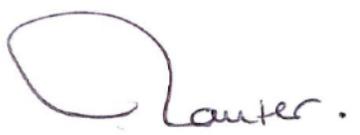
Mr. Yuan Qi  
Science Editor, Editorial Office  
World Journal of Hepatology

Ref: Manuscript ID NO: 32372

Dear Sir,

Please find below our responses to the reviewer's comments on our manuscript "*CD4+ T cells and NK cells: Biomarkers for hepatic fibrosis in HIV/HCV-coinfected patients*" that was submitted for publication in *World Journal of Hepatology*. The revised manuscript is attached. We would like to thank you and the reviewer for your comments and suggestions, which have been very helpful and have resulted in what we believe is a significantly improved manuscript.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Natalia Laufer", followed by a vertical line.

Natalia Laufer, MD, PhD  
Investigador Asistente - CONICET  
Instituto Investigaciones Biomédicas en Retrovirus y SIDA INBIRS  
(ex Centro Nacional de Referencia para el SIDA)  
Universidad de Buenos Aires  
Paraguay 2155 Piso 11  
C1121ABG - Buenos Aires  
Argentina  
TE +54 11 4508 3689 int 110  
FAX +54 11 4508 3705E-mail: natalialaufer@gmail.com

Reviewer #1:

« This is an interesting paper looking at the potential role of CD4 T cells and NK cells as biomarkers for hepatic fibrosis in patients coinfecting with HIV/HCV, who present a therapeutic challenge. Could the authors please respond to the following questions/comments? » 1) 2) Had the HCV positive patients received any treatments (either at the time of the experiment or prior) and which ones? 3) What was the HCV RNA

level of these patients? 4) Regarding the level of fibrosis, how many patients were evaluated by biopsy and how many by fibroscan?

- 1) *“Regarding the test groups, did the authors consider patients with only HIV and only HCV in terms of their NK and CD 4 T cell expression pattern?”*

The main objective of the study was to find a biomarker of the level of liver fibrosis specifically among HCV/HIV coinfecting individuals and for that reason only patients with both infections were included.

- 2) *“Had the HCV positive patients received any treatments (either at the time of the experiment or prior) and which ones?”*

Forty percent of patients have received pegylated interferon and ribavirin for HCV treatment, a median of  $6.25 \pm 1.48$  before sample collection. None of these patients achieved sustained virological response. A paragraph has been added to the manuscript with this information.

- 3) *“What was the HCV RNA level of these patients?”*

The median HCV RNA was  $6.32 \pm 0.64 \log_{10}$ . For patients with advanced fibrosis (F3-F4) was  $6.18 \pm 0.70 \log_{10}$  and for patients with low to mild fibrosis (F0-F2)  $6.54 \pm 0.24 \log_{10}$ . This data was added in the manuscript.

- 4) *“Regarding the level of fibrosis, how many patients were evaluated by biopsy and how many by fibroscan?”*

Liver fibrosis was determined by biopsy in 10% of patients and by transient elastography in 90%. This information was also included in the main text.