

## **Response to the editors and reviewers**

Dear editors and reviewers

Thank you for your time reviewing this manuscript. We found your comments valuable in improving the manuscript. Please find below reply to each point raised.

Sincerely

Dr Ayman Bannaga

### **Special requirements for figures**

Figures regenerated from SPSS into PowerPoint format

### **Requirements for references:**

Provided the PubMed numbers and DOI citation numbers to the reference list

Listed all authors of the references

References are cited by Arabic numerals in square brackets and superscripted in the text

### **Article highlights:**

Added

### **Peer-review report(s)**

Reviewer #1:

Scientific Quality: Grade C (Good)

Language Quality: Grade A (Priority publishing)

Conclusion: Minor revision

We thank you for your review and appreciate your time and advice

There are some suggestions for the authors:

In the section of "Neutrophil to lymphocyte ratio (NLR)" and "Albumin bilirubin grading system", the majority was devoted to the association between NLR and multiple diseases, but the association between NLR/ALBI and HCC were not elaborated. Please make the topic clear and the contents well organized.

This section was moved to the introduction and summarised to further make the topic clear

2. In the section of "Discussion", please discuss the difference between results of your research and previous studies.

The study in our centre was similar to the results of the published literature and the systemic search carried in the manuscript and we highlighted the areas of similarities between the validation study in our centre and the systematic search findings

3. Stronger evidence may be needed for the conclusion of “ALBI grade performs better than CTP score”.

We reached this conclusion according to the systematic search and the ROC curve demonstrated in our validation cohort. We raise this point to encourage discussion among readers and also to highlight this emerging model for stakeholders interested in HCC management

Reviewer #2:

**Scientific Quality:** Grade A (Excellent)

**Language Quality:** Grade A (Priority publishing)

**Conclusion:** Minor revision

We thank you for your review and appreciate your time and advice

Recommend adding a section about the concept of ALBI score as a linear predictive score and the utility of technique tailored specific scores which were later proposed upon ALBI score and their performance as prognostic tools. This issue has been raised in several articles, please see the attached links for the meant studies and scores. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhep.2018.08.027>  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/hep.31022> <https://doi.org/10.2147/JHC.S168682>

This was added in the introduction

“HCC literature continues to report on studies from around the world aiming to find simpler prognostic markers for the disease. Linear predictive models generated from large data sets were shown to be able to prognosticate for HCC patients. [7,8] Indeed, simpler prognostic ways are required given the complexity of the intermediate stage of HCC. [9] The emerging literature describes two new markers in HCC prognosis, the Neutrophil to Lymphocyte Ratio (NLR) and the Albumin Bilirubin (ALBI) grade.”

**Science Editor comments:**

I found no “Author contribution” section. Please provide the author contributions

Completed

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

Figures uploaded separately as PPT as requested

I found the authors did not add the PMID and DOI in the reference list. Please provide the PubMed numbers and DOI citation numbers to the reference list and list all authors of the references. Please revise throughout

As above

I found the authors did not write the “article highlight” section. Please write the “article highlights” section at the end of the main text;

Article highlights completed

I have changed the manuscript type “review” to “systematic review”.

Title of manuscript changed accordingly

The authors need to revise the manuscript according to the Guidelines and Requirements for systematic review and fill out the PRISMA checklist form with page numbers; and

Checklist completed

Provide the Biostatistics Review Certificate

Completed and attached

The author should number the references in Arabic numerals according to the citation order in the text. The reference numbers will be superscripted in square brackets at the end of the sentence with the citation content or after the cited author’s name, with no spaces.

As above