

Reviewer #1:

I studied the article with great interest. It certainly deserves the praise and approval of publishing it. However, I have a suggestion to remove the section on peripheral blood mononuclear cells from the article. The authors write: Moreover, the expression of circAKT3 was increased in PBMCs of patients with esophageal cancer compared to that in healthy controls (Figure 1B). It seemed to me that these differences are not obvious judging by the range of variability and the median. Secondly, this fact is not included in the conclusions and even in the Discussions section. And finally, third, many questions arise at once about the nature of the circAKT3 correlation in malignant and non-malignant cells of an oncological patient. Perhaps, if we remove the results for PBMC, the level of significance in the statistics section will be higher than  $p < 0.05$ . In the Discussion section, there is a phrase: In addition, miR-17-5p acted as downstream molecule to inhibit the effects of circAKT3 on esophageal cancer cells. It seems to me better then to explain the difference between this inhibition and sponging.

Thank you for comments and suggestions. We had removed the section about the peripheral blood mononuclear cells from the manuscript. Indeed, this section was not necessary in this work, and removing it could not affect the whole results.

As microRNAs usually function as a sponge to bind to the specific sites of circRNAs, which relieve the inhibitory effect of microRNAs on the targeted mRNA. Therefore, we changed this sentence to “In addition, miR-17-5p acted as a sponge molecule to inhibit the effects of circAKT3 on esophageal cancer cells”.

Editorial office's comments

1 Scientific quality: The manuscript describes a basic study of the CircAKT3 governs malignant behaviors of esophageal cancer cells by sponging miR-17-5p. The topic is within the scope of the WJG. (1) Classification: Grade A; (2) Summary of the Peer-Review Report: The publication of this article is laudable and commendable, however, the phrases in the illustration and discussion sections need further modification. The questions raised by the reviewers should be answered; and (3) Format: There are 1 table and 4 figures. A total of 30 references are cited, including 22 references published in the last 3 years. There are no self-citations. 2 Language evaluation: Classification: Grade B. A language editing certificate was provided. 3 Academic norms and rules: The authors provided the Biostatistics Review Certificate, the Institutional Review Board Approval Form, the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Approval Form and the ARRIVE Guidelines. The authors need to provide the signed Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure Form and Copyright License Agreement. No academic misconduct was found in the CrossCheck detection and Bing search. 4

Supplementary comments: This is an unsolicited manuscript. The study was supported by National Cancer Center Fund Project. The topic has not previously been published in the WJG. The corresponding author has not published articles in the BPG. 5 Issues raised: (1) I found the authors did not provide the approved grant application form(s). Please upload the approved grant application form(s) or funding agency copy of any approval document(s); and (2) 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. 6 Re-Review: Not required. 7 Recommendation: Conditionally accepted.

Thank you for your comments and advices. The relevant materials were provided and uploaded according to your demand.