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Flat C, 23/F., Lucky Plaza,  
315-321 Lockhart Road,  
Wan Chai, Hong Kong, China

## ESPS Peer-review Report

**Name of Journal:** World Journal of Gastroenterology

**ESPS Manuscript NO:** 5764

**Title:** Cancer stem cell markers correlate with early recurrence and survival time in patients with hepatocellular carcinoma

**Reviewer code:** 00068250

**Science editor:** Gou, Su-Xin

**Date sent for review:** 2013-09-25 16:42

**Date reviewed:** 2013-09-26 13:36

CLASSIFICATION	LANGUAGE EVALUATION	RECOMMENDATION	CONCLUSION
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A (Excellent)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Priority Publishing	Google Search:	<input type="checkbox"/> Accept
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade B (Very good)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade B: minor language polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Existed	<input type="checkbox"/> High priority for publication
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade C (Good)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: a great deal of language polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> No records	<input type="checkbox"/> Rejection
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade D (Fair)		BPG Search:	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor revision
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade E (Poor)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: rejected	<input type="checkbox"/> Existed	<input type="checkbox"/> Major revision
		<input type="checkbox"/> No records	

## COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

1 There is bias in the baseline data between the two groups. More patients with liver cirrhosis and lower platelet counts are found in the ER group. As cirrhosis is an important factor influencing overall survival of HCC patients after hepatectomy, their authors need to explain in the discussion section how to manage this bias. Propensity-score matching will cover this bias. 2 Some abbreviations in the abstract are presented without complete phrase, for example, "putative LCSC markers", "three CSC markers". 3 Edmondson grade and tumor size are significantly associated with survival time of HCC patients, which is widely known conclusion. Log-rank analysis of them is unnecessary. 4 From Table 3, CD90 expression is significantly associated with higher Edmondson grades, and this result should be explained in detail.



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### ESPS Peer-review Report

**Name of Journal:** World Journal of Gastroenterology

**ESPS Manuscript NO:** 5764

**Title:** Cancer stem cell markers correlate with early recurrence and survival time in patients with hepatocellular carcinoma

**Reviewer code:** 00159425

**Science editor:** Gou, Su-Xin

**Date sent for review:** 2013-09-25 16:42

**Date reviewed:** 2013-09-30 09:27

CLASSIFICATION	LANGUAGE EVALUATION	RECOMMENDATION	CONCLUSION
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A (Excellent)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Priority Publishing	Google Search:	<input type="checkbox"/> Accept
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade B (Very good)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade B: minor language polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Existed	<input type="checkbox"/> High priority for publication
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade C (Good)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: a great deal of language polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> No records	<input type="checkbox"/> Rejection
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade D (Fair)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: rejected	BPG Search:	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor revision
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade E (Poor)		<input type="checkbox"/> Existed	<input type="checkbox"/> Major revision
		<input type="checkbox"/> No records	

### COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

This paper addresses the clinical impact of three cancer stem cell markers (CD 133, CD 90, and EpCAM) in patients with hepatocellular carcinoma. It was well conducted study, despite being non-randomized. The authors applied the method of propensity-score matching to compare the groups with and without early recurrence. Interestingly, the EpCAM expression was associated with shorter survival, and CD90 expression was associated to early recurrence after hepatectomy for hepatocellular carcinoma. This is a very interesting paper. Certainly, some of the results need to be validated by prospective studies. However, the manuscript is acceptable for publication in the World Journal of Gastroenterology.



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## ESPS Peer-review Report

**Name of Journal:** World Journal of Gastroenterology

**ESPS Manuscript NO:** 5764

**Title:** Cancer stem cell markers correlate with early recurrence and survival time in patients with hepatocellular carcinoma

**Reviewer code:** 00503516

**Science editor:** Gou, Su-Xin

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CLASSIFICATION	LANGUAGE EVALUATION	RECOMMENDATION	CONCLUSION
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A (Excellent)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Priority Publishing	Google Search:	<input type="checkbox"/> Accept
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade B (Very good)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade B: minor language polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Existed	<input type="checkbox"/> High priority for publication
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade C (Good)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: a great deal of language polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> No records	<input type="checkbox"/> Rejection
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade D (Fair)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: rejected	BPG Search:	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor revision
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade E (Poor)		<input type="checkbox"/> Existed	<input type="checkbox"/> Major revision
		<input type="checkbox"/> No records	

## COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

Zhe Guo et al investigated the association of the cancer stem cell markers CD133, CD90 and EpCAM with the recurrence and survival time in patients affected by hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). The data presented indicate that the expression of the three markers is linked to HCC tumor onset and/or progression; additionally the authors show that EpCAM and CD90 are associated with shorter survival time and early HCC recurrence, respectively. This work may contribute to expand our knowledge with regard to the identification of novel HCC markers; however some technical aspects should be clarified as below detailed. As CD133 is a transmembrane glycoprotein (page 7 line 5 from top) it is unclear why the authors detect it in the cytoplasm. The same problem exists also for the marker CD90 which, although being a membrane protein, is detected by the authors exclusively in the cytoplasm (page 7 line 8 from top). Unless properly addressed, this aspect may seriously impair the strength of the author data with regard to CD133 and DC90 correlation with HCC. On page 7 line 13 from bottom and on page 8 line 3 from bottom, the authors propose “a role” for the markers under investigation in HCC oncogenesis: however none of the data presented establish a mechanistic relation between the markers and HCC biology. I therefore suggest the authors to substitute the word “role” with “correlation” in the text.