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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:** 4512

**Title:** Short-term effect of pre-intervention with branched-chain amino acids in patients receiving therapeutic intervention for hepatocellular carcinoma such as transarterial chemoembolization or radiofrequency ablation

**Reviewer code:** 00070138

**Science editor:** Zhai, Huan-Huan

**Date sent for review:** 2013-07-03 20:13

**Date reviewed:** 2013-07-04 10:38

CLASSIFICATION	LANGUAGE EVALUATION	RECOMMENDATION	CONCLUSION
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A (Excellent)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Priority Publishing	Google Search:	<input type="checkbox"/> [ Y] Accept
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade B (Very good)	<input type="checkbox"/> [ Y] Grade B: minor language polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> [ ] Existed	<input type="checkbox"/> [ ] High priority for publication
<input type="checkbox"/> [ Y] 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

The study found BCAA pre-intervention could significantly suppress the development of post-operative hypoalbuminemia and reduce inflammatory reactions during the subsequent clinical course in 162 patients, the changes in serum Alb level were inversely correlated with C-reactive protein (CRP) changes. It is very important for patients with HCC to avoid hypoalbuminemia after the treatment of TACE or RFA.



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**Title:** Short-term effect of pre-intervention with branched-chain amino acids in patients receiving therapeutic intervention for hepatocellular carcinoma such as transarterial chemoembolization or radiofrequency ablation

**Reviewer code:** 02439938

**Science editor:** Zhai, Huan-Huan

**Date sent for review:** 2013-07-03 20:13

**Date reviewed:** 2013-07-14 14:02

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 checked="" 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

Dear authors: You provide a research on increasing ALB levels and decreasing CRP levels in HCC patients with TACE or RFA treatment when pre-treated BCAAs. There are some different from other published papers, but there are several issues in the manuscript. 1. How to determine the control group for TACE and RFA group? What are the criteria of inclusion and exclusion? What are the differences? 2. The sample size is not consistent between method discription and table 1, table 2. And also there are two number mistakes on page 7, for ALB level, it should be  $3.3\pm 0.4$  g/dl in BCAA group and  $3.8\pm 0.4$  g/dl in non-BCAA group. 3. How to determine the "pre" value on Fig 1-4? All showed 0.0. However, in "statistical analysis" paragraph, it showed "data were expressed as Mean $\pm$ SD". And there were no significant difference in Fig 2-4, even Fig 4-D showed there were different between BCAA group and control group, but the sample size in BCAA group was too small. So it's not convinced. 4. In Fig. 5, the  $r^2=0.072$  for A, the  $r^2=0.324$  for B, so it is not convinced the relationship between CRP and ALB. 5. The English language should be thoroughly revised. There are spelling mistakes within manuscript.



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**ESPS Manuscript NO:** 4512

**Title:** Short-term effect of pre-intervention with branched-chain amino acids in patients receiving therapeutic intervention for hepatocellular carcinoma such as transarterial chemoembolization or radiofrequency ablation

**Reviewer code:** 02461636

**Science editor:** Zhai, Huan-Huan

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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

In the manuscript entitled "Short-term effect of pre-intervention with branched-chain amino acids in patients receiving therapeutic intervention for hepatocellular carcinoma such as transarterial chemoembolization or radiofrequency ablation", the authors have examined the effect of Branched chain amino acids (BCAA) on the albumin levels in patients operated with RFA or TACE. The results do show an influence of BCAA in reversing the reduction in albumin seen in these patients. The authors also measure inflammatory marker, C-reactive protein. The data are good but more information could enhance the overall quality of the paper. Below are the issues that need to be addressed: 1. Are there other markers that are induced in HCC patients operated by RFA or TACE?(for example alpha-fetoprotein?) It would be useful to have data on one more marker of HCC other than just C-reactive protein. This would enhance the overall quality of the paper. 2. Some of the methods are incompletely described. The authors have not provided complete method for how c-reactive protein or albumin are measured in samples from these patients.



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**ESPS Manuscript NO:** 4512

**Title:** Short-term effect of pre-intervention with branched-chain amino acids in patients receiving therapeutic intervention for hepatocellular carcinoma such as transarterial chemoembolization or radiofrequency ablation

**Reviewer code:** 00011373

**Science editor:** Zhai, Huan-Huan

**Date sent for review:** 2013-07-03 20:13

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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
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## COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

Evaluation of manuscript "Short-Term effect of pre-intervention with branched-chain amino acids in patients receiving therapeutic intervention for hepatocellular carcinoma such as trans arterial chemoembolization or radiofrequency ablation" General points. Material & Methods 1 -It is stated that 270 patients were included in this study. TACE was performed in 162 patients, 76 were BCAA pretreated and 86 were non-pretreated with BCAA. In table 1 and 2 are described the demographic characteristics of this group but numbers do not fit. Numbers in the table are 73 (38 control group, 35 BCAA treated group) and not 162 (76 control Group and 86 BCAA treated group). No explanation of this subtraction is given. 2- Figure 2 is related to results of RFA group, but numbers in parenthesis are those of TACA group (38 control and 35 BCAA treated) Differences statistically significant Most of data related to differences between control and treated groups are not statistically different. TACE group, Fig 1, 4/9 values are statistically different. Fig 3, 0/12, of twelve points non are statistically different. RFA group Fig 2, 0/9, non out of nine points measured showed differences statistically significant. Fig 4, 2/12, in two out of twelve points there are differences statistically significant Fig 5 there is not a correlation of the effect of BCAA pretreatment between changes in serum CRP and changes in serum albumin in TACE group. Besides all de inconsistencies mentioned, authors did not present evidence that BCAA pretreatment reduces postoperative complications. I will take part of the text of the manuscript as my final conclusion after evaluation, Page 12, second paragraph " The present results suggest that BCAA treatment prior therapeutic intervention suppresses a decrease in serum Alb level associated with TACE or RFA and may reduce postoperative complications although



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confirmation of such effect observed in this study through prospective investigation and clarification of the underlying mechanism are needed” In conclusion I agree with authors if there is a reduction of postoperative complications it is necessary to have a follow up of these patients and for the manuscript to be publish, results of this follow up should be part of this manuscr