ESPS PEER-REVIEW REPORT

Name of journal: World Journal of Gastroenterology
ESPS manuscript NO: 21299
Title: Importance of SALL4 in the development and prognosis of hepatocellular carcinoma
Reviewer's code: 03253495
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Science editor: Jing Yu
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CLASSIFICATION	LANGUAGE EVALUATION	SCIENTIFIC MISCONDUCT	CONCLUSION
[ ] Grade A: Excellent	[ ] Grade A: Priority publishing	Google Search:	[ ] Accept
[ ] Grade B: Very good	[Y] Grade B: Minor language polishing	[ ] The same title	[ ] High priority for publication
[Y] Grade C: Good	[ ] Grade C: A great deal of language polishing	[ ] Duplicate publication	[ ] Rejection
[ ] Grade D: Fair	[ ] Grade D: Rejected	[ ] Plagiarism	[ ] Minor revision
[ ] Grade E: Poor		[Y] No	[Y] Major revision
		BPG Search:	
		[ ] The same title	
		[ ] Duplicate publication	
		[ ] Plagiarism	
		[Y] No	

COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

The paper is interesting to the readership of WJG. However, i have some statistical comments.   1) The findings of the paper are not strongly supported by the statistical approach adopted. Cox univariate/multivariate analysis should be performed in order to correctly evaluate the impact of SALL4 expression on patient survival. In fact, on the basis of the correlation between SALL4 levels and tumor stage, some concerns raise on whether tumor stage or SALL4 really influence survival. The independent prognostic role of a prognostic factor (in this case SALL4) should be adequately tested by means of univariate and then multivariate regression analysis.   2) The authors report a total follow-up time of 70 months. It seems to me too long, considering the time elapsed from the study period (2008-2010) until the end of follow-up (2014). How was it calculated? I recommend reverse Kaplan-Meier method to compute follow-up length.   3) Survival times should be expressed as median and 95% confidence intervals. Instead, authors report only mean survival (not the optimal measure for time-to-event data) and do not mention any confidence intervals.   4) As correlation between expression of SALL4 in hematopoietic stem cells and expression of such a marker in HCC is

reported throughout the manuscript, please cite in Introducion and/or Discussion a recent review on this topic "Facciorusso A, Antonino M, Del Prete V, Neve V, Scavo MP, Barone M. Are hematopoietic stem cells involved in hepatocarcinogenesis? Hepatobiliary Surg Nutr. 2014 Aug;3(4):199-206."   5) Please report in Figure 2 the p values resulted from log-rank test and the number at risk (i.e. patients at risk of death at any time points).   6) The bibliography was not carefully prepared. There are many repetitions: for instance, ref 15 and 17; or ref 16 and 18. Please, be much more careful as your paper aims to be published in an international impacted journal