

PEER-REVIEW REPORT

Name of journal: World Journal of Gastroenterology

Manuscript NO: 49482

Title: Prevalence of hepatocarcinoma-related hepatitis B virus mutants in patients in grey zone of treatment

Reviewer's code: 00069423

Reviewer's country: United States

Science editor: Jia-Ping Yan

Reviewer accepted review: 2019-06-03 16:48

Reviewer performed review: 2019-06-06 20:50

Review time: 3 Days and 4 Hours

SCIENTIFIC QUALITY	LANGUAGE QUALITY	CONCLUSION	PEER-REVIEWER STATEMENTS
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Priority publishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Accept	Peer-Review:
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Minor language	(High priority)	<input type="checkbox"/> Anonymous
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: Good	polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Accept	<input type="checkbox"/> Onymous
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: A great deal of	(General priority)	Peer-reviewer's expertise on the
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade E: Do not	language polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor revision	topic of the manuscript:
publish	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Rejection	<input type="checkbox"/> Major revision	<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced
		<input type="checkbox"/> Rejection	<input type="checkbox"/> General
			<input type="checkbox"/> No expertise
			Conflicts-of-Interest:
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
			<input type="checkbox"/> No

SPECIFIC COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

June 5, 2019 Review of the article: Prevalence of Hepatocellular carcinoma-related HBV mutants in patients in gray zone of treatment. General comments Treating patients with chronic hepatitis B, especially the HBeAg (-) patients have been more of a problem

for physicians because a significant portion of these patients tend to be in grey zone compared to those positive for HBeAg based on the various available guidelines. Importantly, they tend to have been infected for longer time than those positive for HBeAg and are at the higher risk for HCC. In this observational study, the authors have conducted a commendable study on patients who are HBeAg (-) with preS and BCP/PC variants that are associated with risk for HCC development. The authors observe that for Sub-Saharan population with CHB, HBV-E genotype is most common HBV genotype. They observed that patients with HBV-E genotype and also with HBV-A genotype have higher prevalence of preS deletion which is associated with an increased risk for HCC. These mutations in the HBV genome put them at an increased the risk for HCC and yet, they tend to be in grey zone for anti-HBV therapy. Therefore, based on their observation, HBV genome study should be carried out for the sub-Saharan patients, increase surveillance for HCC among patients with PreS deletion in order to provide more aggressive therapeutic approaches. The guideline may have to be modified for this particular population. Years ago, Dr. Baruch S. Blumberg (The Nobel laureate for discovery of HBV) in Philadelphia and his research colleagues who were stationed in Sub-Saharan Africa, observed that the peak age of HBV-HCC for patients in sub-Saharan Africa was the middle 30's (32 years), which is much younger than the average age of HCC in other endemic regions. Whether or not the additional risk factor of HBV genome mutations in this population could have played a role in the early onset of HCC development, that would be an interesting question. Minor comments. 1. Under Result, line 4, HEV should be HBV-E. 2. Under Discussion, on p. 14, The paragraph starting with Although.... is somewhat confusing. Especially, the 5th line of the para 'treatment is positive, without liver disease progression... Please, rewrite the sentence. 3. On p. 16, para 2 line 2, normalor should be normal or



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INITIAL REVIEW OF THE MANUSCRIPT

Google Search:

- ☐ The same title
- ☐ Duplicate publication
- ☐ Plagiarism
- ☐ No

BPG Search:

- ☐ The same title
- ☐ Duplicate publication
- ☐ Plagiarism
- ☐ No

PEER-REVIEW REPORT

Name of journal: World Journal of Gastroenterology

Manuscript NO: 49482

Title: Prevalence of hepatocarcinoma-related hepatitis B virus mutants in patients in grey zone of treatment

Reviewer's code: 03261379

Reviewer's country: Romania

Science editor: Jia-Ping Yan

Reviewer accepted review: 2019-06-09 09:32

Reviewer performed review: 2019-06-09 11:40

Review time: 2 Hours

SCIENTIFIC QUALITY	LANGUAGE QUALITY	CONCLUSION	PEER-REVIEWER STATEMENTS
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Priority publishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Accept	Peer-Review:
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Minor language	(High priority)	<input type="checkbox"/> Anonymous
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade C: Good	polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Accept	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Onymous
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade C: A great deal of	(General priority)	Peer-reviewer's expertise on the
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		<input type="checkbox"/> Rejection	<input type="checkbox"/> General
			<input type="checkbox"/> No expertise
			Conflicts-of-Interest:
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

SPECIFIC COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

Congratulations on your study. Indeed, antiviral treatment in patients in "the grey area" is controversial. In my opinion, any study providing arguments that these patients should receive treatment is more than welcome. However, your study only characterizes



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carcinogenic mutations, without a clear correlation to the development of hepatocellular carcinoma, probably due to the relatively small follow-up period. Your discussion and references should focus on this aspect. It is essential to determine how many of the patients presenting the respective mutations ultimately develop HCC and also how long after the initial infection the HCC appears, in order to establish clear treatment recommendations. Also, the work needs English language revision.

INITIAL REVIEW OF THE MANUSCRIPT

Google Search:

- ☐ The same title
- ☐ Duplicate publication
- ☐ Plagiarism
- ☐ No

BPG Search:

- ☐ The same title
- ☐ Duplicate publication
- ☐ Plagiarism
- ☐ No