Reviewer's report

Title: Genomic imbalances in 5918 malignant epithelial tumors: An explorative meta-analysis of chromosomal CGH data.

Version: 2 Date: 27 July 2007

Reviewer: Bradley Coe

Reviewer's report:

General

In the manuscript entitled “Genomic imbalances in 5918 malignant epithelial tumours: An explorative meta-analysis of chromosomal CGH data”, Michael Baudis presents a description of the genomic features of epithelial tumours with a focus on the defining features of various histologies and phenotypes. The manuscript presents the data in a descriptive format which would be a valuable resource to the comparative genomics community.

However a few issues need to be clarified:

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The discussion is well written but lacks adequate citations to previous work. The author should compare his findings to that of other cross tumour comparisons such as Myllykangas S, et al. DNA copy number amplification profiling of human neoplasms. Oncogene. 2006 Nov 23;25(55):7324-32., which examined amplifications across various tumour types. Additionally the discussion of regions such as 3q should include discussion to previous studies which have found similar results in specific subtypes. For example, a pubmed search of “3q squamous” returns 143 citations (two examples are below)


I feel that the expansion of the discussion to reference the existing literature would better define the novel/validating features of this manuscript (which has a far greater sample size than most histology specific studies) and greatly strengthen its utility to the genomics field.
Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Figure 3 would benefit from a legend for the “clinico-path entity” and “histological group” colour coding scheme.

Table II – The definition of background used in this manuscript should be included.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Figure 3, 4 and 5 would benefit from a tree on top of the cluster so that the reader can interpret the structure of the clustering of entities.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests