

Review report

Final title: Association of Syndecan-1 immunoexpression with epithelial dysplasia in oral verrucous carcinoma

Title at submission: Association of Syndecan-1 immunoexpression with epithelial dysplasia in oral verrucous carcinoma

Submission date: 30 Sep 2024

Revised submission: 24 Feb 2025

Accepted: 24 Feb 2025

Reviewer E: Sheuly Ferdoushi, ORCID: [0009-0009-4037-3833](https://orcid.org/0009-0009-4037-3833)

1. **Comment** The study does not suggest specific future research directions
this study does not clearly define clinical utilization of the study results
The author does not say what further steps are needed to justify the syndecan as a diagnostic tool epithelial dysplasia in OVC
Avoid phrased 'SO'

Response We included future research direction and further steps that needed to justify syndecan-1 to evaluate epithelial dysplasia in conclusion and limitation chapters and clinical utilization of the study result in introduction chapter. We avoided the phrase 'SO'.
2. **Comment** Study period is not mentioned in the abstract.

Response Study period is included in the abstract.
3. **Comment** Mention the objectives in introduction section

Response The objective is mentioned in the introduction section.
4. **Comment** Mention the research gap between current study and other previous study
Write down the clear connection between Syndecan I and OVC.
Clearly mention research hypotheses and specific objectives.

Response The research gap between the current study and other previous studies, objective, hypothesis, and connection between syndecan 1 and ovc are mentioned in the introduction section.
5. **Comment** Only 45 cases are included, which limits the statistical analysis and generalizability.
The reason why the sample size is small is not stated.

Response The reason for the small sample size is included in the limitation section.
6. **Comment** Mention confident interval in table 2
Use standard terminology in result section (e.g. loss of syndecan I expression or positive/negative in table 2).

 - Write a table for relationship of grading of dysplasia and syndecan I expression
 - Draw a table about confounding variables that might influence results.
 - Avoid Figure 4 avoid capital letter in results section (page 7, line 18, page 8, line 8, 16, 18)

Response Confidence interval is mentioned, terminology is corrected in the result section, and capital letters are avoided in the result section. There were 2 tables and 4 figures; we reduced the numbers to 1 table and 2 figures. So, if you permit, we can keep figure 2 (previously labeled as figure 4).

 - In this study, we only evaluated the presence or absence of epithelial dysplasia in OVC and its relationship with the expression of syndecan-1. We did not grade the dysplasia in our study.
 - Confounding variables are included in the method section. We avoided the table to reduce the number of tables.
7. **Comment** Numbers of tables and/or figures could be decreased.

Response The number of tables and figures has decreased. There were 2 tables and 4 figures; we have reduced the numbers to 1 table and 2 figures.
8. **Comment** In this study, in conclusion, the authors show the association of syndecan I and epithelial dysplasia in OVC. I think it is an overstatement.
Write down the specific recommendation to address the gap that helps further research.

Response Conclusion is corrected, and a recommendation is suggested to help further research
9. **Comment** There are minor grammatical mistakes, and some sentences are awkwardly phrased.

Response Grammatical mistakes and sentences are corrected.

Editor: M Mostafa Zaman, ORCID: [0000-0002-1736-1342](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1736-1342)

1. **Comment** Revise the document as per the editing done by the reviewer.
Response I have revised the background of the abstract, introduction, methods, discussion and conclusion as per editing done by the reviewer.
 2. **Comment** Reduce the length of the manuscript to 1500 words, 3 tables and max 20 references.
Response I have reduced the length of the manuscript. Word count of abstract is 238 and main text (Introduction to Conclusion) is 1498 in the revised manuscript. In previous manuscript there was 2 tables and 4 figures; now i reduced it to 1 table and 2 figures. In the manuscript there are 14 references.
 3. **Comment** Convert the Highlights to "Key messages" in descriptive terms (not bullet points) with 50-60 words.
Response I have converted the Highlights to "Key messages" in descriptive terms in 56 words. Bullet points are removed.
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