Peer Review File

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Reviewer Comments

The literature, data extraction, and analyses of this article were well-structured. A standardized approach was utilized and the meta-analysis was properly. A few minor questions as follows:

1. For literature screening: were any attempts made at collecting the unpublished data?

Reply 1: We made some attempts at collecting the unpublished data through retrieval of Cochrane Library for uncompleted studies, Web of Science and China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) for conference papers and academic dissertation. But we didn't have collected any useful unpublished data.

2. For Data retrieval: please list the disagreements between the first two researchers and how the third researcher resolved the divergence, and how to justify the studies and data from studies are combinable.

Reply 2: (1) In this manuscript, when we extracted the data from included studies, there exist no disagreements between the first two researchers, because the data we extracted from the studies were first author, gender, age, publication date, cancer type and sample size, etc. This data was simple, clear and objective, so there exist no subjective disagreements between the first two researchers. And this sentence "The data of included study were extracted separately by two researchers (Biyun Lu and Zhou Liu), and the third researcher (Xiaoying Ji) will help to resolve possible divergence" was kind of normal writing for this methods part in meta-analysis. If reviewer thinks this sentence is unnecessary, we can delete it as required.

(2) In methods part of "Literature screening" (Line 95, page5), we clearly listed the inclusion and exclusion criteria for studies screening. If the studies meet the criteria and include sufficient data we need, we will justify the studies and data from studies are combinable and analyze it for production of results.

3. For the result/conclusion: are the results generable? how large the study/sample size will be considered adequate to validate these interim findings?

Reply 3: (1) Though there exist some limitations in our study, the result of our study was based on standard data extraction and statistical analysis of 17 published studies. So, the results are generable. (2) Currently, as far as we know,

there may be no specific standard to justify how large the study/sample size will be considered adequate to validate interim findings. But in our opinion, if some large and standard randomized controlled trials (RCT) were finished to evaluate prognostic and clinicopathological role of HOXA-AS2 in human cancers. The findings based on these RCTs will be more authentic and convincible. Because of the small sample size of our study, we draw the conclusion more cautiously.

4. Table 1, please add reference No. to the corresponding studies.

Reply 4: Thanks so much for your advice. The reference No. was added to the corresponding studies in Table 1

Changes in the Table 1: see Table 1 in format of excel with red font, because the table in word displays incompletely.