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Direttore: Prof. Roberto Catanesi

Bari, Italy, May 3, 2024

Name of journal: *World Journal of Gastroenterology*

Manuscript NO: 94490

Title: *Aspergillus niger prolyl endopeptidase in celiac disease*

Provenance and peer review: Invited Manuscript; Externally peer reviewed

SPECIFIC COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

The editorial pointed out the shortcomings of the previous article. In the article by Stefanolo JP et al., the comparisons are not significant. Meanwhile, in this study was not tested the exposition to gluten. It's not clear whether the data would be different under a condition with normal amount of gluten. Additionally, it is crucial to increase the sample size of Stefanolo JP et al. in subsequent experiments. Despite examining 628 stool samples, only 37 patients actively participated in the study. For patient outcomes, are any patients still experiencing progression after treatment (refractory CeD)? Previous studies have highlighted that the activation of intraepithelial lymphocytes to eradicate epithelial cells is the underlying pathogenesis. Did the authors take into account this within the treatment group? In general, AN-PEP treatment as a pilot study gives us a help for searching other adjuvant therapies along GFD. Although there's still a lot to be done.

Authors' response: *We would like to thank the reviewer for appreciating our editorial and for agreeing with all our points of view.*