

Dear Dr. Lian-Sheng Ma,

In this letter we address the review's comments about our manuscript entitled "Conservation and variability of Hepatitis B Core gene in chronic patients at different clinical stages: A deep sequencing approach" (manuscript NO 55044). First of all, we would like to thank for the comments and the reviews. We modified the abstract according to the limit of words reported in the guidelines for manuscript revision and we wrote the highlights field. We added in table 2 the number of patients (N) of the genotype's percentage and we mentioned in legend the normal ALT and AST values as required by the reviewer. Moreover, we added a supplementary table (supplementary table 2) with the BioSample ID list of the patients' sequences uploaded in BioProject (ID: PRJNA625435). In addition, we re-edited the manuscript with a native English speaker as pointed out by the reviewer.

As required by the Editor, and following the "list of issue for the accepted manuscript", we reduced the manuscript title to a maximum of 12 words, reformatting the manuscript as reported in the above-mentioned list, we eliminated from the acknowledgments the paid language editing service, we prepared the tables as three-line tables, we substituted in table 2 the non-statistical p values with "ns", and we substituted the asterisk representing the p value in figure 6 with the letter "a". Figures are reported in both .tiff format in the manuscript and editable format in the separate powerpoint file.

We hope that you will find our manuscript suitable for publishing in *World Journal of Gastroenterology* and look forward your response.

Sincerely,

Maria Francesca Cortese, PhD