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SPECIFIC COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

The study is well-designed and the findings are based on a reasonable sample size of elderly patients with CRC. The results are interesting. The authors conducted a retrospective study and analyzed the mRNA and protein expression levels of TEX14 and ADAM17 in CRC tissues compared to adjacent normal tissues. They found significantly higher expression levels of both genes in CRC tissues. Moreover, the positivity rates of TEX14 and ADAM17 expressions were associated with various clinicopathological characteristics of the patients, such as tumor differentiation, infiltration depth, TNM staging, lymph node metastasis, and distant metastasis. The authors concluded that TEX14 and ADAM17 may serve as potential biomarkers for early diagnosis and evaluation of CRC in elderly patients. The study can be accepted with some minor revision: (1) Introduction: It would be helpful to include a brief overview of the current diagnostic and prognostic markers used in CRC to highlight the potential significance of TEX14 and ADAM17 as novel biomarkers. (2) Methods: The qRT-PCR and immunohistochemistry protocols should be described in more detail. (3) Discussion: the authors should discuss how their results compare to previous studies investigating TEX14 and ADAM17 in CRC. Future research and the clinical implications of the findings should also be discussed.

Response:

- (1) Thank you for your suggestion. We have added an introduction to TEX14 and ADAM17 in tumor tissues in the preface.
- (2) We have included specific experimental steps in the qRT-PCR and immunohistochemistry experiments.
- (3) Thank you for your suggestion. We have incorporated relevant content into the discussion.