

Von: Emma Veitch em@editorialmanager.com
Betreff: PLOS ONE: PONE-D-15-06679 - appeal request - [EMID:40421e7036a7e057]
Datum: 4. Juni 2015 15:03
An: Nathanael Raschzok nathanael.raschzok@charite.de

EV

PONE-D-15-06679
microRNA signatures in peripheral blood fail to detect clinically significant allograft rejection after liver transplantation
PLOS ONE

Dear Dr. Raschzok,

I am writing to you with regard to your appeal on the editorial decision for your submission to PLOS ONE above; my apologies for the delay in getting back to you on the appeal.

I have carried out an initial assessment of the appeal, looking over the peer review history, your rebuttal letter and revised paper, and also have had correspondence with your previous Academic Editor who handled the paper. The editor's comments on the explanations you give in your appeal letter are enclosed below my message.

After careful consideration of the original reviews, and in light of the previous concerns raised by the reviewers, and the editor's commentary on those concerns and your response, we consider that the decision for rejection should be upheld.

As you are aware, PLOS ONE does not make the level of advance a criterion for publication, and manuscripts are assessed on the basis of the scientific soundness of the work. However, as we understand the editor's comments, the issue relates to the extent to which the protocols employed in the paper can be relied on to support the claims made in the paper. Having assessed your response, the editor is still concerned about this issue to the extent that he believes the paper cannot be taken further for publication in its current form.

We do feel however that if you are able to thoroughly and adequately address the concerns raised (specifically, the editor suggests that a comparison against established protocols would add to the claims of the paper), a revised manuscript may be suitable for consideration. This would however require a substantial amount of work and thus, would be considered as a new submission.

If you are able to revise the manuscript as indicated above and submit a new manuscript to PLOS ONE, please refer to the original submission in the covering letter and accompany the submission by a rebuttal letter that responds to the original reviewer's comments.

I am sorry that we cannot be more positive on this occasion, but I do hope that you will find these comments useful when deciding how to proceed with your manuscript.

With best wishes,

Regards,

Emma

Emma Veitch, PhD
Freelance Editor, PLOS ONE
www.plosone.org
www.plos.org

Editor comments on appeal:

Here is what I think is a problem. While I do have a considerable amount of sympathy for the authors because technically they are correct in pointing out that they were indeed following instructions from commercial outfits that supplied them with the kits and reagents that they utilized for the studies, however, the reviewer feels that the commercial companies are NOT providing correct advice on how to perform the studies and hence the data obtained is flawed significantly enough to warrant his decision.

I have a lot of respect for the reviewer and I do not at all believe he has any bias towards the authors and I sincerely believe he is providing very important and scientifically sound critique.

So, unfortunately I am not able to change my decision with regards to this manuscript because I can see that some of the procedures being followed do not make sense to me. Letting blood samples sit overnight to perform a very sensitive PCR based assay is bound to provide answers that are likely to be influenced by the conditions in which the samples were kept. While the assay may technically work and provide accurate data as indicated, at issue is whether the data can be interpreted in an objective fashion to reach the overall conclusions.

I think if the authors were to address the issues by comparing their protocol to established protocols for performance of such assays and show that their assay gave results similar to the established protocols, I think would have definitely made me re-think their objection and rebuttal.

I am really sorry, but feel compelled to analyze the issues in as objective fashion as I possibly can.

