May 19th, 2023

Dear Committee of the International Xenotransplantation Association,

I am writing to express my support for Yoon Ji Bang’s research on the hepatic pathology in pig-to-NHP islet transplantation. As a professor guiding the integrated Ph.D. course, I have had numerous interactions with her, including mentoring sessions, coursework, and research projects. In each of these endeavors, she consistently demonstrated outstanding intellectual curiosity, critical thinking skills, and a strong work ethic.

The shortage of donor organs has driven the exploration of alternative therapies for type 1 diabetes, and pig-to-human islet xenotransplantation holds tremendous promise as a potential beta cell-replacement therapy. Yoon Ji Bang’s research focuses on the understanding of the hepatic pathology during and after this transplantation procedure, which is crucial for the success and safety of the therapeutic approach. By utilizing spatial transcriptomic analysis to investigate the transcriptomic changes *in situ* within the hepatic tissue of pig-to-NHP islet recipients with short-term graft survival, she discovered significant upregulation of adipogenesis and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) pathways, including increased expression of SREBF1, CEBPA, IGF1, and TNFRSF12A. These findings offer valuable insights into the underlying causes of hepatic pathology during islet transplantation.

I firmly believe that these findings are both fundamentally and translationally important to the field of xenotransplantation immunology and will be of broad interest to the members of the International Xenotransplantation Association. Furthermore, based on Yoon Ji Bang’s exceptional skills in experimental design, data analysis, and her commitment to scientific rigor, I have confidence in her ability to continue making significant contributions to this field. Therefore, I highly recommend Yoon Ji Bang’s research on xenotransplantation through any available means, including financial support and opportunities for further research.

Best regards,

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