**Supplementary Letter: Approval for Co-author Addition**

Dear Editor,

We formally request approval to add two co-authors (Guihua Zhu and Jie Ao) to the revised manuscript. Their inclusion is based solely on substantial contributions to new experiments performed during revision, as required by the reviewers.

**Contributions and Timeline of New Authors**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Contributions  | Period  |
| Guihua Zhu | Collected and analyzed clinical data;Interpreted IHC and RT-qPCR results. | From April to June 2025 |
| Jie Ao | Conducted supplementary RT-qPCR experiments; Validated experimental reproducibility and statistical analysis | From May to June 2025  |

**Justification for Initial Omission**

These co-authors did not participate in the original study (initial experiments covered only 6 samples). Their involvement became essential when expanding the sample size to 15 during revision.

**Confirmation of Authorship Agreement:**

All authors (including the new co-authors) have consented to this change via the journal's email confirmation system.

**Tracking of New Contributions in Manuscript:**

Added annotations in the revised manuscript: Methods Section: "RT-qPCR analysis was performed on 15 clinical samples. [Comment: New experiments by Jie Ao]. Figure 2 Legend: "Representative Representative RT-qPCR and IHC results in 15 samples. [Comment: Expanded by Zhu Guihua].

Sincerely, Yan Chen1,\*, Xin Ran2,3\*, Ping Fu1, Jie Ao1, Guihua Zhu1, Lianhua Zhao1, Hualiang Xiao1 .

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