Reviewer's report

Title: Clinicopathologic characteristics and treatment outcomes of hepatoid adenocarcinoma of stomach, a rare but unique subtype of gastric cancer

Version: 1 Date: 21 January 2011

Reviewer: Rosario Caruso

Reviewer's report:

In this study, the authors have evaluated clinicopathologic characteristics, treatment, outcome, and prognosis in patients with gastric hepatoid carcinomas. The authors perform a computer search of pathology report to identify hepatoid adenocarcinoma of the stomach. In particular, pathologic data included histopathological characteristics such as differentiation, Laurèn classification, immunohistochemical staining and serum AFP.

There are critical points that need clarification.

1) Although it is stated both in the Introduction and in Discussion that hepatoid adenocarcinoma has been considered as a specific entity diagnosed by histological features that resemble hepatocellular carcinoma, regardless of AFP production, this is not made clear in the immunohistochemical part of Methods and Results sections. In other words, what were the diagnostic criteria used to define an hepatoid adenocarcinoma of the stomach?

2) In the Results, the authors report that there were nine patients with intestinal type, five with mixed type and four with diffuse type. Usually, hepatoid adenocarcinomas have the histological and immunohistochemical of both liver cell carcinoma and conventional intestinal-type adenocarcinoma. The authors should provide morphological and immunohistochemical documentation on four tumors that are described in the text as diffuse carcinomas. Furthermore, morphologic characteristics are not established in 8 out of 26 cases according to Laurèn classification, as revealed in table 1.

3) The Methods section can benefit from a better description of the antisera used for differential diagnosis of hepatoid adenocarcinoma.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests