Reviewer's report

Title: Effects and Outcomes of Interferon Treatment in Japanese Hepatitis C Patients

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Reviewer: Takafumi Saito

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Yamasaki et al. reported a long-term cohort study of HCV infection that was carried out in small islands of Japan. In this manuscript, they have shown the interventional effect of IFN therapy to HCV on the survival rate, irrespective of viral response to this therapy. The findings of this paper are valuable, but several points need to be addressed.

1. The study was carried out in the area endemic for HCV infection, where the positivity rate of anti-HCV antibody was 7.6 %. The case of acute HCV infection might have been included in the subjects. No information of liver histology has been shown in 446 cases of hepatitis C in Table 1. Please put histological data in this table to make clear whether all subjects had findings of chronic hepatitis.

2. HCV infection is involved in many extrahepatic conditions, particularly heart disease or hematological malignancy may relate to the death. Please state “other causes” of death in the text.

3. Fig.5 is complicated. Grouping looks a mismatch between the graph and patients at risk. What is Group C (Fig.5B)?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.