Reviewer’s report

Title: Diagnostic Accuracy of Cyst Fluid Amphiregulin in Pancreatic Cysts

Version: 1 Date: 30 September 2011

Reviewer: Paula Ghaneh

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This paper evaluates the use of cyst fluid amphiregulin levels in the diagnosis of pancreatic cysts.

Comments:
1. The question is an important one as the number of patients with cystic lesions in the pancreas is rising and tests which can differentiate benign and malignant cysts are needed.
2. What were the inclusion criteria for the study – were all patients with cysts considered or were there other criteria such as cyst size or suspicious features? The authors must have had some criteria to ensure an appropriate range of cases.
3. It is not entirely clear how the cyst fluid samples were obtained – can the authors describe how the cyst fluid was obtained – all EUS or some at surgery? Also how much fluid was required/harvested?
4. Was the ELISA fully validated?
5. The main drawback is the size of the patient sample and the mixed patient population – but this is probably acceptable for a pilot feasibility study – did the authors perform a sample size calculation for this study?
6. What was the sensitivity/specificity of CEA for this cohort of patients?
7. The authors should stress that this test needs further validation in larger prospective series.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

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’