Reviewer's report

Title: Macrocytosis is associated with mortality in chronic hemodialysis patients

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Reviewer: Robert Means

Reviewer's report:

This is a clearly written, appropriately analyzed paper. So far as I can see MCV has not been studied specifically as a mortality predictor in a dialysis population. The same is true of MCV as a marker of erythropoietin resistance, although this is a result one would have expected intuitively. The use of multiple MCV values from each subject is a strength.

Most limitations are recognized.

MAJOR

1. The authors tend to over emphasize the erythropoietin resistance aspect of their findings in the present report, particularly in the conclusion. It serves as a distraction from the main point, which is MCV as a predictor of mortality. This is particularly true of the conclusion, in which erythropoietin resistance is mentioned first. That is not to say that MCV as a sign of erythropoietin resistance is not important or interesting, because it is both. I would suggest that erythropoietin resistance and MCV be the subject of a second, smaller paper derived from these studies.

2. On the same topic, is darbepoietin/hemoglobin ratio a mortality predictor? I infer from the paper that it is not, but it should be specifically stated.

3. The authors make the point that B12/folate deficiency does not explain the MCV findings in the patients in whom these values are available. This is a valid point, enhanced by the fact that, as MCV became higher, these parameters were checked. However, the lack of B12/folate levels in all patients should be noted as a limitation, although a minor one.

DISCRETIONARY

4. The background on some figures is gray while on others it is white. A consistent format makes for easier reading.

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'