Author's response to reviews

Title: Expense and Benefit of Neoadjuvant Treatment in Squamous Cell Carcinoma of the Esophagus

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PDF covering letter
Dear Editor,

as follows, you will find a point by point response to the referees« comments:

1. Response to report from Ted Trimble
   
c/1. Now it is included in the concluding paragraph, that the results are based on a non randomized historical case series and that more controlled trials in advanced tumor stages are needed.

2. Response to the reviewer«s report of Dr. F. Farinah:
   
c/a.) The number of patients not suitable for esophagectomy was not documented exactly since treated partially only in the medical department. Our policy might be described as follows: Patients rejected to undergo combined treatment also would not have been had surgery alone.
   
c/b.) The proportion of patients pretreated only by chemotherapy or chemoradiation was now described within the second paragraph of section "Patients and Methods", also was already mentioned in second paragraph of the results.
   
c/c.) The causes of postoperative deaths are now depicted in the second paragraph of the "Results" section.

The fact that both groups were not entirely comparable in terms of tumor stage resulted out of the inclusion criteria for neoadjuvant treatment. This is commented on in the paragraph No. 5 in the "Discussion" section.

Since this is a basically retrospective investigation the degree of toxicity of the cytotoxic pretreatment was not documented sufficiently. This is stated within the second paragraph of the section "Results". Unfortunately we experienced it to be insufficient looking for side effects within the routine documentation in the patient charts.

The paper of Ancona (Cancer 2001) was published in June, two months post submission of this manuscript. It does not basically change the situation that evidence for the efficacy of neoadjuvant treatment in esophageal cancer based on randomized trials is still rare.

This manuscript was revised by a native speaking english translator.

Hoping that these comments and the corresponding corrections will make the paper more suitable to be published

sincerely yours

PD Dr. J.W. Heise