Reviewer's report

**Title:** Clinical significance of preoperative serum vascular endothelial growth factor, interleukin-6, and C-reactive protein level in colorectal cancer.

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 29 January 2010

**Reviewer:** Moritz Koch

**Reviewer's report:**

The present article examines the prognostic role of VEGF, IL-6 and CRP values in preoperative serum samples from patients undergoing curative resection for colorectal cancer. Including 143 patients the authors reported that elevated VEGF serum levels were significantly associated with worse outcome. Although the idea of this study seems interesting and the sample size is rather high, I have some major comments.

1. The authors should state and explain why they switched in the results part between mean values for examining differences between control and cancer patients and median values for survival analysis.

2. There is no detailed information regarding histopathological reports of the resection margins of the patients included in this study. Although the authors claim that they only examined patients with curative resection it should be further shown if they had patients with R1 resection and how many patients were excluded due to not curative resection.

3. The statistical analysis needs to be checked by a statistician. It is not clear to me why the authors did not perform a multivariate analysis to show the true prognostic effect of VEGF. As VEGF was significantly associated with tumor size and CEA levels it might not be an independent prognostic factor. UICC stage as a known prognostic factor should also be included in survival analysis to underline the quality of the study and patient cohort.

4. Clinical informations regarding follow-up time and number of patients with subsequent metastases and disease recurrence are completely missing and and should be included to enhance the clinical and prognostic value of this paper.

**Minor comments:**

1. The lines in Table 1 are shifted and, therefore, Table 1 is unclear.

2. The manuscript needs to be revised by a native speaker as there are some spelling and grammatical errors.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests