Reviewer's report

Title: Metastatic lymph node in gastric cancer; Is it a real distant metastasis?

Version: 6 Date: 16 August 2009

Reviewer: Giovanni de Manzoni

Reviewer's report:

Unfortunately the authors could not answer to the question I have posed because the analysis of the hepatoduodenal ligament nodes were not done separately and the study is a retrospective study. However they reported in the methods and in the conclusion clearly this bias. There is no doubt that without these informations the paper is weaker anyway it could be still interesting for those closely related to the problems of N staging and lymphadenectomy in gastric cancer patients.

They also reported as requested by the first referee the median survival of a group of stage IV patients operated and this survival appear lower compared to n°12/n13 positive patients.

In conclusion I believe that the paper could be accepted for publication

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'