Reviewer's report

Title: Trastuzumab with either docetaxel or vinorelbine as first-line treatment for patients with HER2-positive advanced breast cancer: a retrospective comparison

Version: 1 Date: 27 August 2009

Reviewer: John Cole

Reviewer's report:

Major revisions: 1) The authors mention potential differences in toxicity between the two regimens; however, they need to provide some toxicity data as this is quite relevant to their analysis and conclusions.

2) Clarification of the final number of patients in each subgroup used for analysis is needed (on page 6 it is stated that 12 patients were not evaluable; however, it appears that those patients were included in the patient characteristics in table one. Were those patients all included in the disease free and overall survival analysis? This needs to be clarified.

3) Indicate the median duration of chemotherapy for each of the regimens (page 10 indicates a longer duration for the vinorelbine group).

Minor revisions: 1) Page 9 paragraph 2 line 6 - ...survival was seen (despite the finding that) patients....

2) page 9 paragraph 2 line 10 - consider substituting analysis for reasoning in that sentence

3) In the discussion the confounding issue of differences in prior chemotherapy needs to be listed with limitations at the start of the discussion.

4) Since most patients will receive both taxanes and vinorelbine for metastatic disease (sequential therapy for metastatic disease is the standard in most centers) do the authors really believe that a randomized trial is indicated?

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.