Reviewer’s report

Title: Skeletal metastasis diagnosed without bone pain showed fewer skeletal related events and death than those with bone pain in post-operative breast cancer patients

Version: 1 Date: 5 March 2010

Reviewer: Georges Vlastos

Reviewer’s report:

Interesting report that is challenging the established guidelines of follow-up for breast cancer patients.

The authors studied the use of repetitive and exhaustive imaging studies such as bone scans with serum markers. They correlated these data with clinical findings such as pain.

It appears from the present study that subsets of patients can be identified regarding bone metastases (with or without pain) and may have different outcome after adjusting for possible bias.

Minor essential revisions:

- Further biological explanations need to be added in the discussion part regarding the relationship of pain and bone metastases as well as the progression of disease.
- Comments and biographic references regarding the psychological impact of intensive follow with bone scans and other imaging studies on quality of life and stress need to be added.
- Economical issues due to additional cost of this intensive proposed follow-up need to be further discussed.

Discretionary revisions:
- In the discussion part, the "ideal" trial to conduct could be outlined.

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 I have no competing interests.