Reviewer's report

**Title:** Radiation Therapy for Desmoplastic Medulloblastoma - A Retrospective Analysis of Outcome and Prognostic Factors

**Version:** 3  **Date:** 23 March 2010

**Reviewer:** Ira Dunkel

**Reviewer's report:**

I am satisfied by the authors’ responses to my prior recommendations with 3 exceptions:

**Major compulsory revisions**

**Page 2:** I had previously commented that: “The authors conclude that "Desmoplasia in medulloblastoma shows a more favorable outcome”, but they have not yet convinced me that their conclusion is valid for the following reasons: (1) Because their series is quite small, the 95% confidence intervals are presumably very wide, (2) 11 of the 20 patients were less than 22 yo and so would have been eligible for pediatric trials. The 5-year EFS in such trials for patients with all medulloblastoma sub-types is about 85% for standard-risk patients and about 70% for high-risk patients, so the outcome reported here does not seem unequivocally superior”. The authors responded that the “Aim of this study was not to compare desmoplastic medulloblastoma with classic medulloblastoma, but to characterize outcome and results within the group of desmoplastic medulloblastoma”.

Given their response, I do not understand how they can conclude (first sentence in the Abstract conclusions) that “Desmoplasia in medulloblastoma shows a more favorable outcome”.

**Minor essential revisions**

**Page 2 and elsewhere:** I had previously requested that all of the Kaplan-Meier analyses should also be accompanied by 95% confidence intervals and continue to feel that that is important.

**Page 6:** I had previously requested that the authors define their term “partial tumor resection”. They have added information to indicate that the “extent of resection was defined on the basis of surgical reports and/or postoperative imaging”, but I do not believe that they have defined what they mean by “partial tumor resection”. Does that imply that more than 1.5 cm2 residual tumor remained post-operatively, or perhaps just that less than a gross total resection was performed?

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable

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.