Reviewer's report

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

Version: 4 Date: 1 June 2010

Reviewer: Christian Senft

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions
  none

- Minor Essential Revisions
  1. The presented data should be checked for correctness. There must be an error in the presentation of patient characteristics (Methods): The data given here are not congruent with the data presented in the supplementary table. 7 patients were < 18 years, and 13 (not 11) were > 18 years. Likewise, the authors state that 13 patients were alive at the time of analysis (page 10, Survival), but according to the supplementary table only 5 patients have died. Were the two patients who were lost to follow up regarded as deceased? Or were they regarded as alive and thus censored in the Kaplan-Meier analysis? This should be clarified.

  2. As stated before, it would be nice to also have data on overall survival as well as local and progression free survival for each (non-)prognostic factor stated in table 1, in addition to only p-values. If these data cannot be presented due to the large number of censored patients, this should be stated, and commented upon in the discussion.

  3. Still, the percentage of patients who received chemotherapy in combination with or after radiotherapy (presented on page 11) should sum up to either 70% of all patients or 100% of patients recieving chemotherapy (70% of all patients). Please check the data or correct typo.

  4. When evaluating the extent of resection as a prognostic factor, a statement on the limiting factor of how complete resection was defined (i.e. according to the surgeon’s impression or CT instead of early postoperative MRI in all patients) should be added into the discussion.

- Discretionary Revisions
  1. The statement “…and was complete in 65%” in the abstract represents a result rather than a method and should be omitted.

  2. I am not sure whether it is advisable to cite a poster presentation – if so, I would suggest to provide the website address where it can be found (Ref. no# 33)
**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.