Reviewer's report

Title: Application of tumor-node-metastasis staging 2002 version in locally advanced hepatocellular carcinoma: is it predictive of surgical outcome?

Version: 1 Date: 21 May 2010

Reviewer: Oliver Stoeltzing

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

- the manuscript is well written and concise. However, the abstract should be edited to clarify the four groups of HCC investigated, this remains unclear until the reader has worked through the manuscript

- resection margin is a critical issue that often is being discussed. The authors should attempt to clarify the value of resection margin in their study as major resections have obviously been performed.

- what does resection margin >0mm mean in the Table 1?

- what exactly is meant by "Multiple tumors, any >5 cm" this is unclear and relates to a general phrase in the UICC system

- the use of "G" for groups (1-4) is mis-understandable since Tumor Grading is usually defined by "G". Authors need to find another definition term for describing the groups

- MELD scores should be investigated and reported to define the "illness" of patients

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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