Reviewer’s report

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

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Reviewer: Oliver Stoeltzing

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have nicely revised their manuscript. However, the definition of resection margin is still troublesome. The definition of a margin = 0 mm is actually R1. This is commonly referred to as the residual tumor status, which is defined by the pathologists. The authors state that 188 pts received a resection with 0 mmm margin = R1 in my view. Hence, the results on survival analysis should to be split up into R1 vs R0 and correlating to defined groups 1-6. Is this feasible for the authors?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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