Reviewer's report

Title: Triple Negativity and Young Age as Prognostic Factors in Lymph Node-negative Invasive Ductal Carcinoma of 1cm or Less

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Reviewer: Marco Colleoni

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The manuscript “Triple Negativity and Young Age as Prognostic Factors in Lymph Node-negative Invasive Ductal Carcinoma of 1cm or Less” by Kwon, Ji-Hyun, focus on a retrospective analysis of clinical and pathology data of patients with node-negative (T1mic, T1a, and T1b) invasive ductal carcinoma who received surgery between Jan 2000 and Dec 2006. Authors identified younger age and triple-negativity as prognostic features in node-negative breast cancer with diameter less than 1 cm.

Several comments are in order:

1. The median follow up duration was 60 months. For the subgroup of patients with endocrine-responsive disease, characterized by a large number of events that appear after prolonged follow up, such a median follow up might be too short. Authors should further discuss this point in the discussion.

2. A Fluorescent in-situ hybridization FISH test was not performed on patients with HER-2 2+ at immunohistochemistry. Was this related to unavailability of further material for this analysis? Literature data indicated that a significant proportion of Patients with HER2-negative status (2+) had amplification of HER2 gene at the FISH test (Eur J Cancer. 2007; 43:2339-44). Authors should further comment on this in the discussion.

3. In the present manuscript for Estrogen receptor, cases with 10% or more positive staining were grouped as positive. However according to the 9th St Gallen Consensus Conference the evidence of endocrine responsiveness is now defined as the presence of any detectable estrogen receptor. Also, in recent papers focusing on breast cancer subtypes, tumors were classified as ER- or PR-positive if staining was present in 1% or more of tumor nuclei (J Clin Oncol 27:1168-1176, 2009). Authors should discuss about literature data supporting their choice.

4. Authors should also indicate literature data supporting the cut off used for Ki-67 positivity (10% of the cells).

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'